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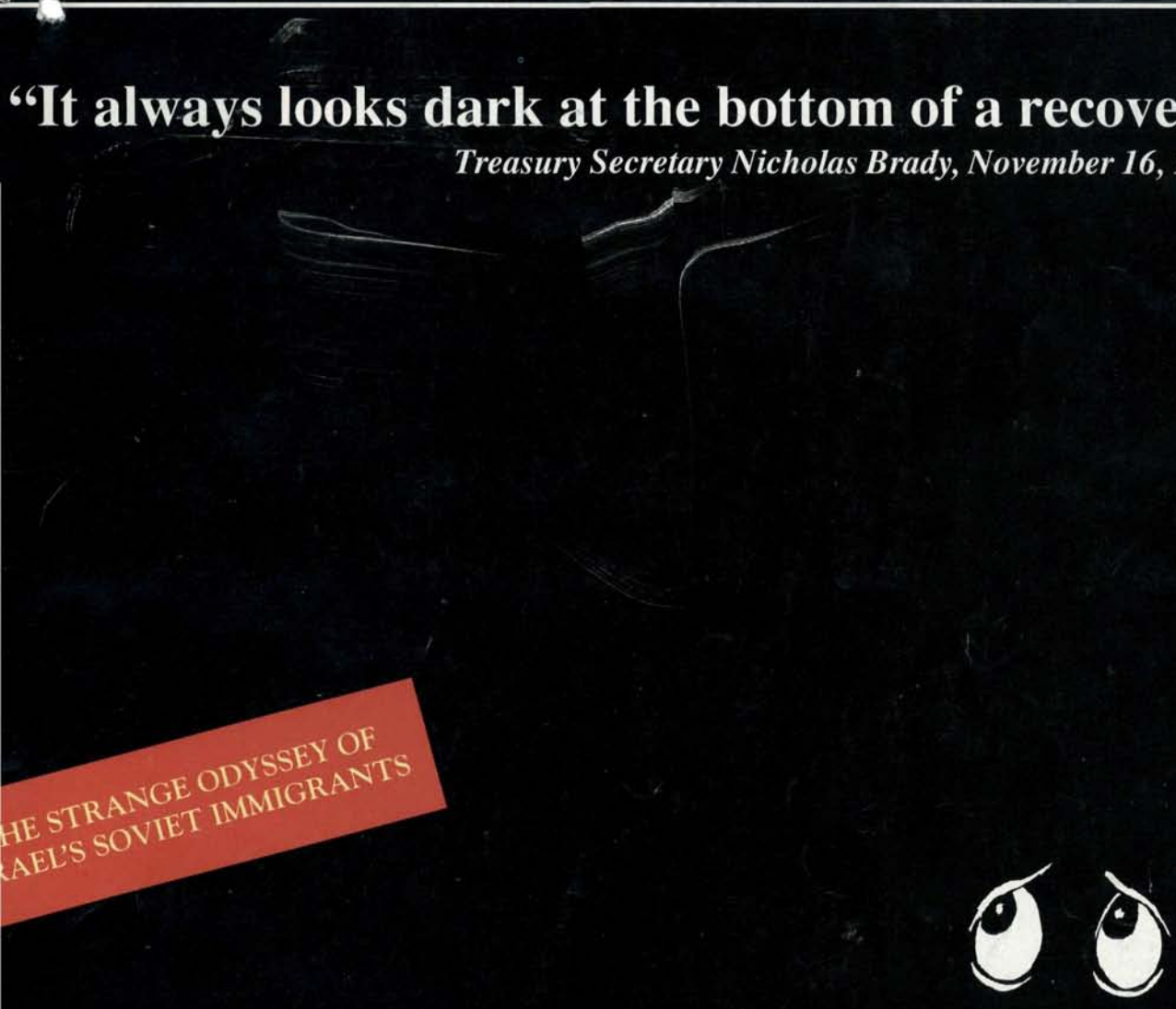
Treasury Secretary Nicholas Brady, November 16, 1991



HE STRANGE ODYSSEY OF
RAEL'S SOVIET IMMIGRANTS

What's *really* wrong with our economy —and how to fix it.

Paul Krugman · Jonathan Rauch · Robert Shapiro · TRB

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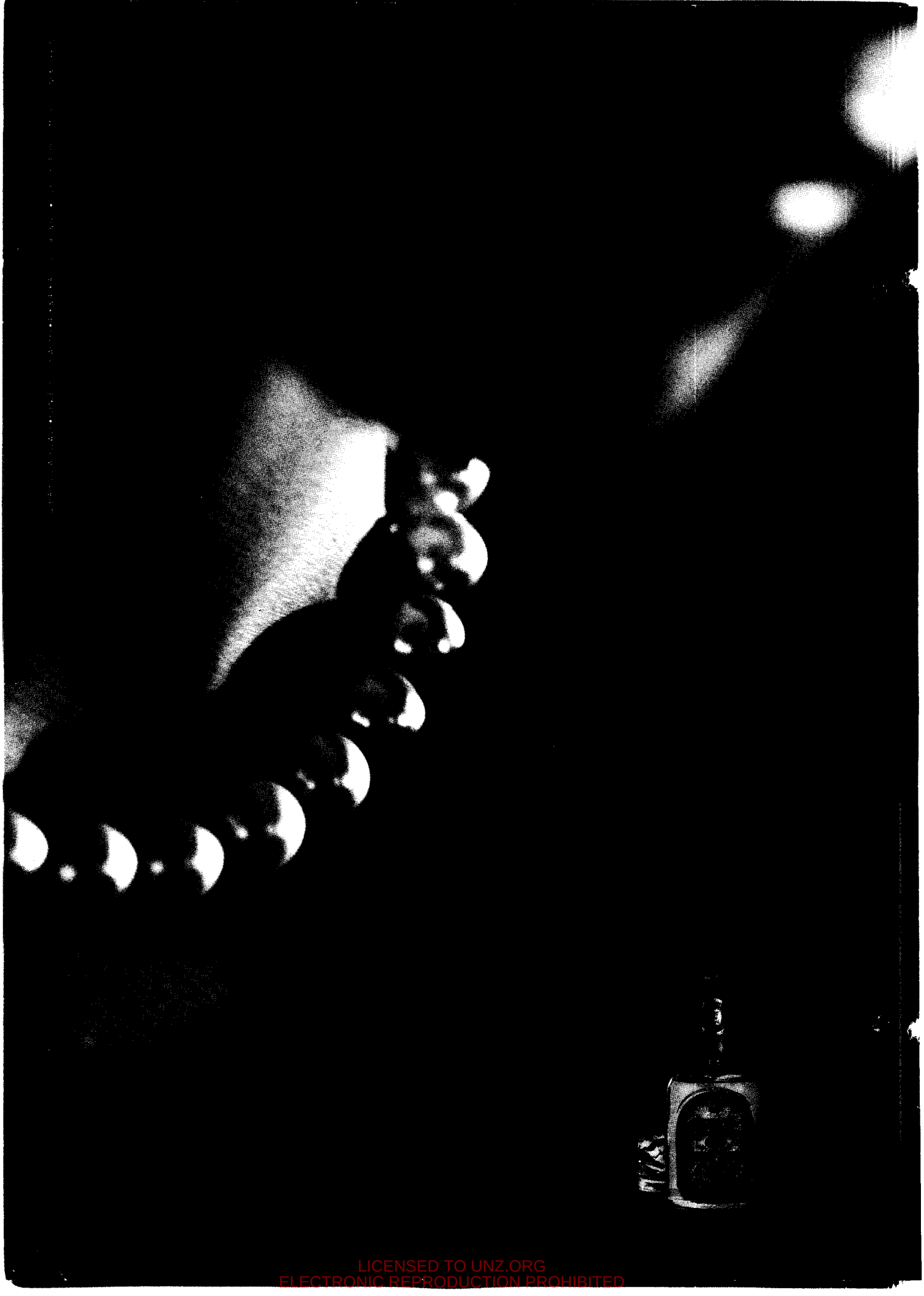

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THE NEW REPUBLIC

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DECEMBER 23 & 30, 1991

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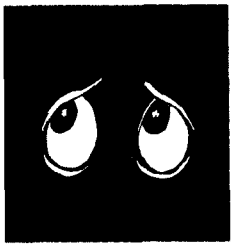

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TRB®

FROM WASHINGTON

House poor

"Of course, statistics paint a sobering picture," said President Bush in his Thanksgiving Address to the Nation: "unemployment, tight credit, lower home values...." Whoa. Stop right there. What's wrong with lower home "values"? Just a couple of years ago there was national anguish over the fading American dream of home-ownership, because soaring home prices meant that no one could afford to buy one. (Home-ownership among 25- to 34-year-olds declined from 52 percent to 45 percent during the 1980s, to pluck a typical hair-pulling statistic from a 1989 issue of *Parade* magazine.) Yet now that prices are coming down a bit, politicians of both parties are proposing government actions to shore them back up.

There also are growing calls for the government to step in and reverse the decline in commercial real estate. Bush offers this as the latest reason to support his treasured capital gains tax break: it "would raise real estate prices and cut the overall cost of the savings and loan cleanup," he says.

Are declining house prices a good thing or a bad thing? In October the National Association of Realtors Housing Affordability Index stood at 118.8, meaning that the median family income was about 20 percent higher than necessary to afford the median-priced house. In 1989 the index was at 108.9, meaning it's significantly easier to afford a house today than it was three years ago. You'd think that would be good, not bad, though we're still a long way from the 151.9 figure of twenty years ago. In the Northeast and the West, the index is still below 100, meaning that the typical family can't afford the typical house.

To be sure, the politics of higher house prices are hard to resist. Most voters already own homes, which are their largest financial asset. You can see this as another battle of the generations, like Social Security, with the old exploiting their clout at the expense of the young. Or you can see it as a simple case of the tyranny of the majority—the lucky ones who are already on board against those who missed the boat.

A dour financier noted recently in *The Wall Street Journal* that household net worth declined last year for the first time since World War II. Falling house prices were the main reason. But the benefits of higher prices are largely illusory, for the country and even for the homeowners themselves. The country does not become richer in any real sense when the exact same stock of buildings and land trades at a higher price. Nor does it become poorer when the price goes down. The land and buildings are there in either case, neither more nor less useful than before.

As for the individual homeowners, in most cases they are going to be living in their houses for many years. Either that or they are going to trade for another house, probably a more costly one. What do they actually gain from higher house "values"? It is only human nature to speculate obsessively on what your house may be "worth." (I do it too.) But the truth is that once you are in the housing market, its general fluctuations matter little to you. The exception is older people who are selling out of the market for good. But these people have generally enjoyed huge run-ups over their lifetimes, and are least deserving of sympathy over a slight decline toward the end.

The remedies now proposed for low house prices—allowing IRA accounts to be spent on down payments, raising the ceiling on FHA mortgages—are the same ones that were proposed a few years ago to help buyers afford high house prices. But to the extent that such breaks help homeowners, by raising "values," they don't help home buyers. In fact, special breaks for homeownership don't really make homes more "affordable." The value of the break simply gets transmuted into higher prices, as the current propaganda implicitly concedes. That is certainly the effect of the granddaddy of all breaks: the home mortgage interest deduction. Anyone knows this who has ever bid on a house after sitting down with a realtor to compute the after-tax monthly cost.

The economics of government policies to raise the price of commercial real estate are, if anything, even more futile and absurd. Especially comic is Bush's idea that the government can save money on the S&L bailout by cutting the capital gains tax. It's true that the S&L fiasco has left the government holding vast acreage of devalued real estate around the country. And it's true that a tax break would increase the value of those holdings, and other holdings the

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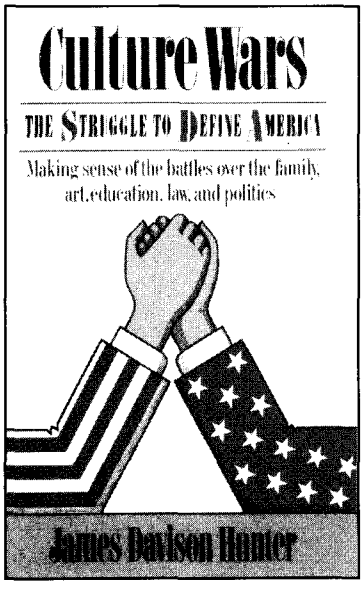
Nowadays your position on Jesus matters less than your position on Rousseau.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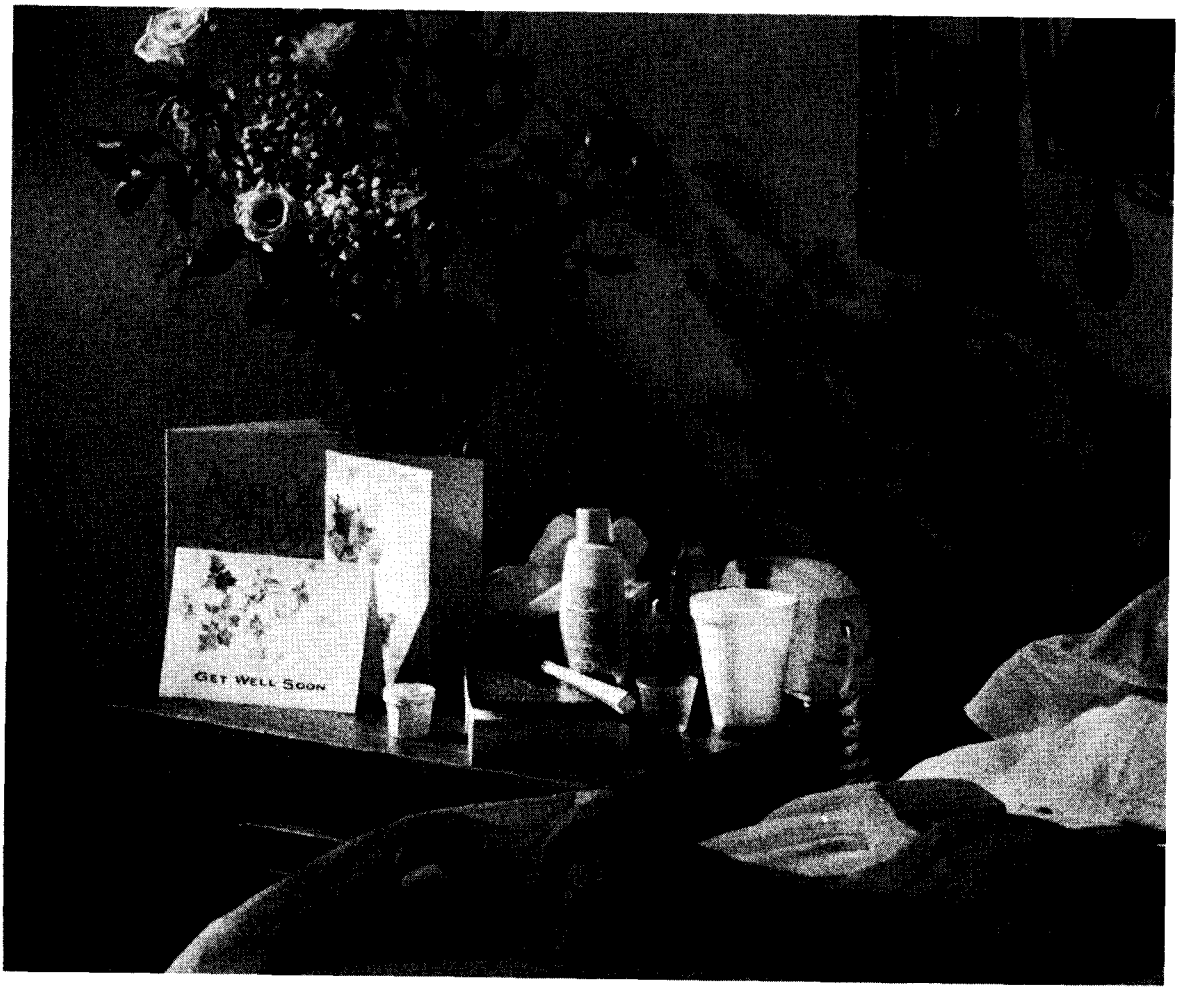

If she lived 30 miles down the road, she might have had a baby someday.

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CORRESPONDENCE

Surprise, surprise

To the editors:

As I testified, under oath, to a Senate Foreign Relations subcommittee on November 22, I was contacted by reporters for both "The Conspiracy That Wasn't" (by Steven Emerson and Jesse Furman, November 18) and a similar article in *Newsweek* shortly in advance of their nearly simultaneous publication. In both cases I said that many of the points they intended to raise would be covered in detail in my book, *October Surprise: America's Hostages in Iran and the Election of Ronald Reagan*, which was scheduled to appear a week later. In both cases the authors were not willing to acknowledge the results of my three years of research, and both rushed into print without waiting to see the book.

The authors set up a series of straw men, crude caricatures of both the evidence and those who have treated that evidence seriously, and then proceeded to knock them down. I do not recognize myself in their gross generalizations, though I am clearly included as one of their generic conspiracy theorists. I also do not recognize the sources they describe, although I have in many cases spent many hours with these men while the authors have for the most part contented themselves with a search for press clips. Emerson was apparently satisfied to rely on unspecified "U.S. and Israeli government documents and officials" as his contribution to original research. In their selective use of evidence, their quickness to demean anyone who has done serious research work on this subject, and their cavalier dismissal of the testimony of numerous sources, they did nothing to further the cause of truth. They did, however, whether intentionally or inadvertently, poison the atmosphere so that a reasoned discussion of these issues has become infinitely more difficult.

In response to my charges that he had made no effort to talk to the principal sources, Emerson made a belated effort to contact Ari Ben-Menashe. He then complained that Ben-Menashe refused to talk to him. As with much of the rest of Emerson's reporting on this issue, that is not quite true. Ben-Menashe offered to discuss the October Surprise with Emerson, but only in front of a TV camera. Emerson declined, just as he declined to appear before the Senate subcommittee.

GARY G. SICK
New York, New York

NATIONAL ENERGY POLICY

Markets or Mandates?

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CATO INSTITUTE

To the editors:

As the reporter for the PBS "Frontline" documentary attacked in "The Conspiracy That Wasn't," I feel compelled to point out some of the article's inaccuracies. Although "Frontline" is accused of embracing the October Surprise allegation, the documentary states several times that we found no definitive evidence or "smoking gun" to prove the charges. We tried to be as even-handed as possible in examining a controversy we neither invented nor injected into the public record. It was "Frontline," for instance, that brought to national attention the Secret Service records showing that the detail guarding then-vice presidential candidate George Bush went to the Chevy Chase Country Club on one of the key dates in question.

At another point, I am singled out for stating that Cyrus Hashemi's death was "mysterious" and that he had been "murdered to shut him up about what he knew about the October Surprise and that the U.S. government has covered up his murder." This claim is a fabrication. I have never asserted and do not believe that Hashemi was murdered to protect the October Surprise or that the U.S. government covered up the circumstances of his death. The only reference to his death in the "Frontline" documentary is contained in four words: "Cyrus died in 1986."

The writers chide us for reporting on the perjury trial of Richard Brenneke, who claimed to have participated in one of the alleged Paris meetings. Brenneke was found innocent by a twelve-member jury in May 1990. Although new evidence has surfaced showing that Brenneke was lying about his own participation in the meetings, we had no choice when our program aired last April but to recount the trial.

The supposed debunking of claims that William Casey met twice with Iranians in Madrid featured centrally in the article. But the authors show little care in addressing the key issue of dates for the first Madrid meeting. Jamshid Hashemi told us and ABC "Nightline" only that this initial meeting occurred in late July. Our review of Casey's *public* appearances leaves a gap for him from July 25 to July 28. Casey's secretary believes he was in Washington on July 26, but her decade-old recollection does not permit any definitive conclusion.

Finally, your authors buy the Israeli story that Ben-Menashe was just a low-level translator for a government intelligence unit. The facts do not back that up. We have interviewed three Iranians, including a former defense minister, who described working with Ben-Menashe on arms procurement during his years in Israeli intelligence. Though

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the Israeli government says Ben-Menashe never traveled on government business, his passports show dozens of foreign trips to countries in South and Central America as well as to Europe and the U.S. A senior Israeli intelligence official confirmed that Ben-Menashe had operated in Poland in 1985, when it was still a Soviet bloc country. Other Israeli officials have told us this travel pattern would never have been tolerated if Ben-Menashe did not have some government authority.

In short, the TNR article is neither an honest nor an objective piece of journalism.

ROBERT PARRY
Arlington, Virginia

To the editors:

When Steven Emerson and Jesse Furman write that Jamshid Hashemi's story is "impossible," they demolish one of the single most important bits of evidence in the entire October Surprise scenario—if they are right, that is. However, it's not that simple.

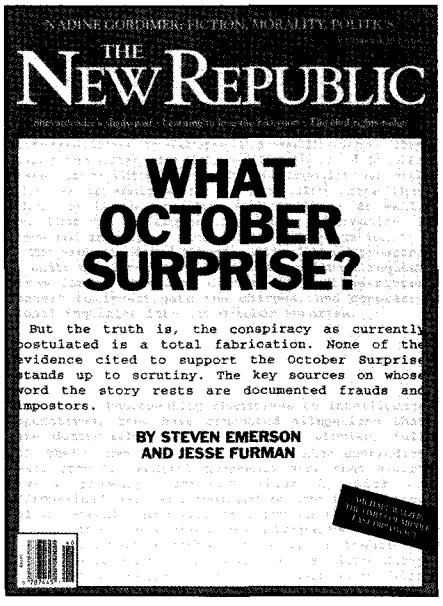
They confine their refutation to dates cited by ABC "Nightline" last summer—and also reported in an *Esquire* magazine article I wrote. They contend that William Casey was too busy in London on July 27 and 28, 1980, to jet off to Madrid for meetings on consecutive days with Mehdi Karrubi and Jamshid and Cyrus Hashemi. But Jamshid Hashemi *never* specified the exact dates beyond saying late July. What about July 29 and 30?

Records at the London conference show that Casey was marked absent on July 30. No one, including Emerson and Furman, has yet produced any evidence as to Casey's whereabouts for most of that day. Casey dined with George Bush at the Alibi Club in Washington in the evening and was interviewed by ABC's Barry Serafin, but no one has definitively sighted him before 8 p.m.—2 a.m. the following morning, Madrid time. That's plenty of time for Casey to have had a morning and afternoon meeting in Madrid and still get back to Washington for dinner.

July 29 is more complicated. Casey was the first speaker at a morning session at the conference that began at 9:30. But after that he is not accounted for. Jonathan Chadwick, who took attendance, had penciled Casey in for all the sessions that day. However, Chadwick says his pencil marks indicate *expected*, not actual, attendance, and were made *before*, not on, the day in question. Chadwick *usually* inked over pencil marks when they deviated from expected behavior. In this case, Casey's pencil mark was never amended. But Chadwick describes his record keeping as "inconsistent." "I might have forgotten or been distracted," Chadwick told me. "When I did not ink over a [penciled] check mark, that leaves open the possibility that I overlooked someone's absence."

Casey probably finished his talk by 10:30 (There was also a second speaker, who finished by 11.) Since the Hashemis often had a private plane on standby to make the ninety-minute flight from London to Madrid, Casey could easily have made it to Spain for a meeting before lunch.

The non-emendation of a penciled check mark is a thin reed to refute Jamshid Hashemi's extended eyewitness


THE NEW REPUBLIC
WHAT OCTOBER SURPRISE?
But the truth is, the conspiracy as currently postulated is a total fabrication. None of the evidence cited to support the October Surprise stands up to scrutiny. The key sources on whose word the story rests are documented frauds and impostors.
BY STEVEN EMERSON AND JESSE FURMAN

account, which is corroborated by five secondary sources and bolstered by hotel records of the Hashemi brothers' stay in Madrid. The fact that hundreds of reporters have yet to pin down Casey's whereabouts on these days lends credence to the hypothesis that he may well have been on a covert action that involved a question of treason.

CRAIG UNGER
New York, New York

Steven Emerson and Jesse Furman reply:

We wish to remind Gary Sick that we first contacted him in July 1991. He refused to talk to us then and continued to refuse, until two days before the article was scheduled to be released. As for rushing into publication: his book, according to a Random House book catalog, was scheduled for publication in January 1992.

We also wish to inform Sick that he made a good decision not to reveal the book's contents to us: we have counted nine more confirmed perjurers and fabricators that he cites as primary sources. As for telling the truth, we have counted at least 300 flat assertions that are factually incorrect.

When we contacted Ben-Menashe earlier this year when he was camping out at Robert Parry's home, he refused to be interviewed, claiming that Emerson didn't believe him. Ben-Menashe, like Sick's other "principal sources," prefers to talk to "reporters" who will not challenge him.

Sick says we didn't interview his "principal sources." It turns out neither did he. In his book, Sick cites the former head of Israeli military intelligence, General Yehoshua Saguy, as "confirming" Ben-Menashe's allegation of a secret Israeli intelligence committee dealing with Iran in November 1980 on which Ben-Menashe served. Insofar as it touches on the heart of Ben-Menashe's credibility, this was probably one of the most important confirmations in his book. Sick's footnote says that Saguy made the comment to Parry. But when contacted, Saguy emphatically denied making any such comment to Parry and said that "no such committee ever existed." Finally, as Sick is aware, we declined to testify before the Senate because we feel that on principle journalists should not become advocates before Congress.

Parry and Unger are grasping at straws when they offer even more possible dates for Casey's alleged attendance in Madrid with the Hashemis without offering any corroborative evidence. As with every other component of the conspiracy, the allegation about Casey only emerged when the allegation that Bush was in Paris began to fall apart. Indicted arms dealer Jamshid Hashemi's sudden recollection this past summer of two consecutive meetings with Casey—eleven years after the fact—was left purposely unspecific to allow for the kind of wild guesswork engaged in by conspiracy supporters. When it was finally determined that Casey was in London and not in Madrid on July 27, 28, and 29, as initially charged, conspiracy supporters have tried to focus on other dates, on which Casey's attendance in Washington has already been accounted for.

It is incredible that Parry would claim that the "Frontline" documentary did not espouse the "October Surprise" conspiracy. In stitching together the conspiracy, "Frontline" 's selective use of "sources"—nearly all of whom were proven fabricators—cannot be considered investigative journalism. Parry points out that he had included a shot of the Secret Service records showing George Bush's attendance at the country club. But this fleeting insertion was typical cover-your-ass journalism: Parry momentarily raised the Secret Service records only disingenuously to question their accuracy. On "Frontline" Parry claimed that the

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THE NEW REPUBLIC

DECEMBER 23 & 30, 1991

THE OTHER LEVER

We're accustomed by now to the usual Bush administration pressure on Israel: convening renewed peace talks at a time and place congenial to the Arabs, linking U.S. loan guarantees for immigrant absorption to Jewish settlements in the West Bank, and hinting, as Secretary of State James Baker recently did in a private letter to Israel's foreign minister, that the United States might drop its putative role as honest broker in peace talks and recommend specific solutions to Middle East disputes. All this is consistent with Bush's grasp of Middle Eastern realities, and as likely to be successful as the rest of his Middle Eastern endeavors. One lever the administration might apply, however, actually could do some good: condition future American aid on genuine economic reform in Israel. This could help turn one of the most regulated and inefficient "capitalist" economies into one of the most productive and independent.

From its socialist Zionist origins, the Jewish state gained a sense of solidarity and community that proved indispensable to its survival. But the legacy of socialism impedes Israel's potential as one of the leading commercial powers in the world. Israel's per capita GDP is just under $10,000, about the same as that of Spain—but behind that of Hong Kong and Singapore. But whereas the East Asian "tigers" have almost completely open and competitive economies, Israel's is still dominated by government, government-protected monopolies, high taxes, and minute regulation. Officially, the government says that non-military public spending accounts for only 35 percent of GDP (against 40 percent in New Zealand, Norway, Portugal, and Denmark), but private economists say this vastly understates the government's true influence. One free marketeer, Alvin Rabushka of the Hoover Institution at Stanford, says that only about 25 percent of Israel's economy is fully free of the state.

Ninety-three percent of Israel's land is government-controlled. Israel's chemical industry is government-owned. So are its defense industries, utilities, airline, phone system, and five biggest banks. Privatization policies have been announced, but not carried out. In Mexico (with one-fifth of Israel's per capita GDP and a strong statist tradition), 900 out of 1,200 government-owned enterprises have been sold off under reformist President Carlos Salinas. In Israel only five out of 160 government-owned companies have been privatized, and those only partially. According to Rabushka, Poland, Hungary, and Czechoslovakia soon will have freer economies than Israel's at the rate that their respective privatization plans are moving.

The Likud government is correctly tagged as "right wing" for its foreign policy, but in economics the term applies the way it does to old Communists in Moscow. Important economic ministries have authority over state-owned enterprises, and appointments to the

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boards of such industries are a major form of patronage for government officials. Also, even though Histadrut, the Israeli labor federation, is historically associated with the rival Labor Party, Likud has only begun forcing it to sell off its unprofitable (and government-subsidized) business empire, which accounts for more than 20 percent of all industrial revenues. And Likud has done little to force sixty "private" monopolies (over products as simple as pencils, light bulbs, and carpeting) to face foreign competition. The pencil monopoly, to take one example, is protected by import regulations requiring that all pencils be individually stamped in Hebrew and be shipped in a box size used only in Israel.

It isn't fair to say nothing has been done to reform Israel's economy. Inflation is down from 450 percent in 1985 to 20 percent today. Led by Secretary of State George Shultz (a former "Chicago school" economist), the Reagan administration created a stabilization fund for Israel and appointed an advisory panel including Herbert Stein of the American Enterprise Institute and Stanley Fischer of MIT to recommend reforms. Israel cut public spending by $1 billion a year, partially freed its capital markets, and removed direct subsidies from food (although agricultural and water subsidies remain). Wages also were partially deindexed for inflation, and though rigid labor regulations still make it hard to fire an employee, immigration has put downward pressure on wages and the government has stopped trying to hold the jobless rate at 4 or 5 percent. It is now 10 percent.

Still, Israel is still far from having a true market economy. It has reached free trade agreements with the EC and the United States, but negotiations to cut barriers on the most sensitive products have yet to be scheduled. The government's deficit is still 6.5 percent of GNP—as high as the recklessly profligate United States! Pension funds still have to invest 50 percent of their holdings in government bonds (down from 65 percent), and banks have to hold half their deposits in government accounts (down from 80 percent). The top marginal tax rate is 45 percent (50 percent, with a temporary surcharge) and applies to incomes above $35,000 a year. In addition, Israelis pay a value added tax of 16 to 18 percent, plus an array of specialized fuel and business taxes, and there is a welter of tax shelters and benefits for privileged economic sectors. Subsidized water—in a water-starved region—leads to overproduction of products that might better be imported, such as cotton.

None of this makes the loan guarantees a bad risk. So far Israel has never failed to meet a loan obligation, although it's true that a large part of current U.S. aid to Israel is being used to pay off old military loans. Israel's foreign debt was 36 percent of GDP in 1990, down from nearly 80 percent in 1985, and debt service costs Israel 15 percent of its export earnings, an easily bearable amount. Israel has foreign exchange reserves of $7 billion, and some economic experts contend that Israel actually could afford to do without U.S. guarantees if it had to, and finance immigrant absorption out of its own capital.

What Israel needs over the long run is not foreign aid or handouts—whether governmental or private—but investment. At the moment it isn't getting much. Israelis invest more outside their own country than foreigners invest in Israel. Progress toward peace will alter that climate somewhat, but thoroughgoing economic reform is necessary to attract the capital to build the industries that will employ Israel's waves of immigrants. The Bush administration should insist on economic reform as a condition for loan guarantees. Because Israel doubts the administration's friendship, the deal should be overseen by a group of some undeniable friends of Israel such as Shultz, Fischer, and Stein.

Even as it pushes Israel to reform, the United States needs to understand that Israel has a unique culture that, though democratic, is not American. Its raison d'être is not individual opportunity, as ours is, but the survival and well-being of a people. At the same time, Israel has got to understand that its future—even its military power—depends on its ability to compete in a world market. Labor socialism may have been a useful ideology for binding a new nation, but it now merely engenders inefficiency and decline. And if it needs role models in a zest for capitalism, it need look no further than the stream of formerly Soviet Jews, whose tolerance for state control of the economy has understandably worn thin.

NOTEBOOK

NO, NO, SAVE IT FOR SUNUNU: "We've got a little toy department to look at to get some stuff for the grandchildren. 'Slime' is the name of it, I believe. It's a toy." —George Bush, in a mall in Frederick, Maryland, November 29. Readers are invited to submit similar Bushisms for regular appearance in this space.

THE *GLOBE* TURNS: The latest battleground for political correctness, it seems, is not the classroom but the newsroom. At *The Boston Globe*, racial tension crackled when a story ran in the rival *Herald* citing resentment among white *Globe* staffers about pay raises given to black reporters at the paper. The raises were awarded after the black reporters were wooed by other papers, and came at a time when most *Globe* staffers had had no raises in two years. *Globe* management subsequently searched for the leakers, homing in on a fax machine and fingering a handful of staffers. At that point, reporter Peter Howe cracked and confessed. His sentence? Accused of bigotry, he was suspended for two weeks without pay. We're not sure what's worse: that a liberal newspaper believes questioning the appearance of racial favoritism is itself racist; or that it has such scant regard for journalistic freedom that

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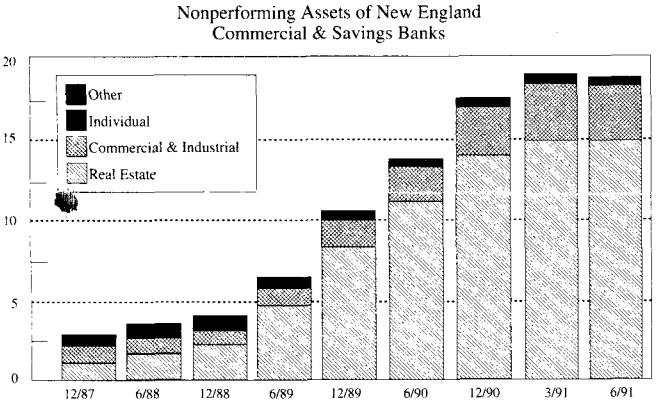
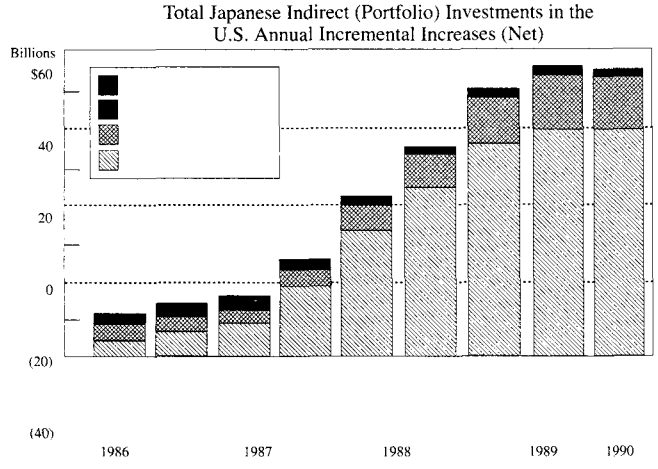
leaking is now considered not a newspaper's trustiest practice, but a crime.

THE ALL-PURPOSE ECONOMICS GRAPH:



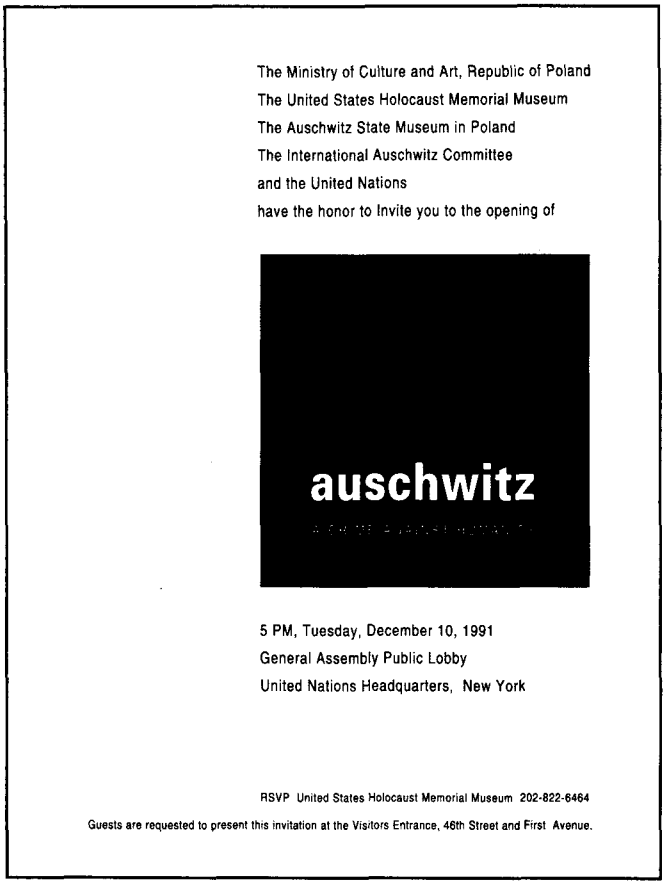


—*The International Economy* (December 1)

DECEMBER SURPRISE: Random House is stuck with two turkeys this Christmas: Gary Sick's *October Surprise* and Seymour Hersh's *The Samson Option*. Both books were discredited by stories in *Newsweek*, the London *Sunday Times*, and by yours truly. But Random House is fighting back by charging—what else?—a new conspiracy. A piece in *Publishers Weekly* alleges "the disturbing specter of potential hidden agendas" in articles debunking the October Surprise. Sick's editor, Steve Wasserman of Times Books/Random House, is quoted as saying, "What [Steven] Emerson has written is a polemic which reads as if concocted in Tel Aviv." Just to ram the point home, other Random House execs are slyly hinting to anyone who'll listen that the Israeli Mossad is behind the TNR piece. Meanwhile Sick is collecting $500,000 for the movie rights to the conspiracy. January Surprise, anyone?

BIG LITTLE MAN: A recent front-page story in *The Washington Post* offered "conflicting views" of accused murderer Henry "Little Man" James. Here is the *Rashomon*-like conflict: on the one hand, James is a thug who reportedly commands a crack ring that has terrorized his neighborhood. Some 200 of his neighbors signed a court petition opposing bail for him because, thanks to him, they've been scared to go out of their houses for two years. He's been charged three times with shooting people. Recently, according to witnesses, he was driving on Interstate 295 when he said he felt like "bustin' somebody," rolled down a window, and killed a 36-year-old Alexandria woman who happened to be driving by with her husband. On the other hand, the *Post* claims, James is a "nurturing" and "interested father" because he sometimes visits his 16-year-old girlfriend, the mother of one of his two out-of-wedlock children, and gave her $140 in cash to buy baby clothes on his son's first birthday. You make the call.

DESIGNER HOLOCAUST: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5 PM, Tuesday, December 10, 1991
General Assembly Public Lobby
United Nations Headquarters, New York

RSVP United States Holocaust Memorial Museum 202-822-6464
Guests are requested to present this invitation at the Visitors Entrance, 46th Street and First Avenue.

KHIEU LITTLE, KHIEU LATE: Few people seem prepared to say the obvious after Khmer Rougeist Khieu Samphan was assaulted by a crowd upon his return to Phnom Penh, so allow us: good. Khieu Samphan was a Cambodian Himmler—twisted, ruthless, murderous. With his customary moral obtuseness, he expected blithely to return home to take part in a coalition government without this record of ter-

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ror being remembered. It's a good sign for the future of Cambodia that he was wrong. The Paris peace accords, which entrench the Khmer Rouge in a coalition government until elections in 1993, are dubious morally and politically, but right now they're the best option Cambodians have. What they shouldn't do is confer any legitimacy on the murderers they tolerate. The West should be careful to ensure that when Cambodians get a chance to say at the ballot box what they just expressed in person, their judgment is given the moral and practical support it deserves.

BOOK ENDS: We're pleased to announce the appearance of *Reimagining American Theatre* (Hill & Wang), a collection of essays and reviews by our theater critic, Robert Brustein. C. Vann Woodward, a contributing editor, has published *The Old World's New World* (Oxford University Press), and Robert Coles is the author of *The Spiritual Life of Children* (Houghton Mifflin). *Children of Cain: Violence and the Violent in Latin America* by Tina Rosenberg, who writes regularly for TNR, has recently appeared from Morrow.

THE CASE FOR GLEE: This is a double issue of THE NEW REPUBLIC and we will not be publishing next week. The editors will be spending their week off elaborately celebrating the departure of a certain White House chief of staff. •

Time to get over it.

BUFFALOPHOBIA

By David Montgomery

"What is life?" asked Crowfoot, the Blackfoot warrior and orator who lived a century ago. "It is the breath of a buffalo in the wintertime." Others concurred. Leafing through nineteenth-century memoirs of pioneers and buffalo hunters, one gets an idea of what was once glimpsed in this beast of the plains:

> The noise resembled low rumbling thunder, and the earth trembled under their pounding hooves. [We] moved up on a slight eminence, and as far as the eye could reach, North, South, and West, a distance of not less than 10 miles in either direction, the whole country was covered with what appeared to be a monstrous moving brown blanket, the length and breadth of which could not be determined. The number of animals it contained was beyond the human mind to estimate.

That's the account of one Colonel Charles Goodnight, who patrolled the plains during the Civil War, quoted in *The American Bison* (1938) by Martin S. Garretson, a member of the New York Zoological Society in the 1930s who fought to bring the bison back.

These days, however, the heroic buffalo—the one painted by Remington, the grand and noble stampeder, the Plains version of Moby Dick—has been woefully forgotten. The spirit and magical powers of the Great Plains beast is absent from the cute neo-buffalo Disney character in *Beauty and the Beast.* Once a symbol of national pride and unity, the buffalo is now reduced to an exhibit at the Buffalo Zoo, located at Delaware Park in Buffalo. Here you behold one bull, six cows, and four little ones, corralled in a pen they could stampede across in a few seconds. Your first impression is: "Has it really come to this?"

Where the buffalo roam today is mostly zoos and meat farms. The largest mammal on the continent is classified as domestic livestock, like the cow. Today the buffalo is the mascot of a minor league baseball team, the Buffalo (New York) Bisons. As if that weren't indignity enough, the deep-fried limbs of scrawny barnyard fowl are called Buffalo Wings. A certain chocolate-covered cookie is a Buffalo Chip. Buffalo heads hang in countless taverns, where their horns get adorned with baseball caps that say, "Losing My Religion." Buffalo the verb means to bewilder or baffle. Once they put a buffalo on a nickel. The nickel last circulated in 1938.

Then there's Buffalo the city. Buffalo calls itself the Queen City, not the King, the second-biggest in New York state. It's a national joke and losing population. It won't even admit it was named after buffalo the critter. Instead, more glamorous, alternative myths persist. Two popular ones are that Buffalo is a corruption of either the French phrase for "beautiful river"—*beau fleuve*—or an Indian word for "beaver." A fancy restaurant in town is called Beau Fleuve. But local historians say these tales are bunk. More likely, buffalo wandered the southern shore of Lake Erie through the 1600s and early 1700s, from which came the name of Buffalo Creek and the City of Buffalo. The city's professional football team is named after one of the great buffalo slaughterers. Buffalo Bill shot 4,280 in seventeen months.

Maybe modern buffalophobia has something to do with aesthetics. Buffalo are one of those species where the adults are supremely ugly and the babies are cute as a button. The adults' fur looks as if someone has thrown an old rug with many bare spots over their lumpy backs. Their posteriors are graceful and appear almost naked, and then the line of their torsos flares out in an appalling explosion of muscle and mane. Their massive heads hang from mountainous shoulders like trophies on a wall. They have cloven hooves, like pigs and the devil. Sometimes the bull in the zoo, named Rick, drives the rest of the herd in front of him around the perimeter of the pen, re-enacting some

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ancient procession from the Plains.

But get behind this shallow aestheticism and you see what millions of Americans once saw. Buffalo are thrilling. People are drawn to them. You can't walk past the buffalo pen in a zoo without checking in with the inscrutable creatures. They awaken a dim yet powerful public memory, a potent stirring of nobility and guilt. They are a caged myth. An American unicorn. "Cattle don't give you an adrenaline rush when you see them," says Glenn Bayger, owner of the B&B Buffalo Ranch of Ellicottville, New York, where he is raising a herd of 400 buffalo for meat. "But when you see a buffalo or an eagle, you get a different kind of feeling."

There are, moreover, signs of revival. North America is now home to 100,000 domestic livestock called buffalo: 17,000 in public wildlife refuges, 80,000 on meat farms to be bred for eating, the rest in zoos and other locations, according to John Malcolm, range manager at the National Bison Range in Moise, Montana. That's down from an estimated 60 million roaming the continent in 1521, the year Cortez became the first white man to see a buffalo, which was residing at the time in Montezuma's Aztec menagerie. But the current population is dramatically up from the total population a century ago, estimated at fewer than 600. "This was a species that was virtually extinct and was brought back through captive management," says Jerry Aquilina, curator of mammals and fish at the Buffalo Zoo, which first housed buffalo in 1892.

And in a startling new development, buffalo has reemerged as the ultimate '90s cuisine. The meat is pricey at $11 a pound or more, but the demand for a taste of buffalo has exploded in recent years. Bob Dineen, manager of Rocky Mountain Natural Meats in Denver, expects to sell 325,000 pounds this year—triple the business he did four years ago. In LaTulip's Klondike Saloon, a frontier-themed place just outside Buffalo, Brian LaTulip serves his lunchtime buffalo burgers with a wedge of watermelon. He says that's in keeping with the "health food" aura of buffalo meat. Since a heart attack a few years ago, LaTulip says he has sworn off cow, but not buffalo. Buffalo meat has more protein and less cholesterol than beef, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture. It feels heretical to bite into buffalo, but it tastes great. The steaks are a little sweeter than beef, not at all gamey. A true buffalo epicure will cook at home, following recipes for buffalo tacos, buffalo Stroganoff, buffalo marsala, or baked buffalo stew.

There's a chance, in short, for a revival of the ultimate American symbol. It's time to shrug off our buffalophobia and regain a critical part of our American inheritance: a national symbol older than the pledge of allegiance, nobler than the bald eagle, as politically correct as Native Americans—and low in cholesterol too. Put it back on the nickel.

DAVID MONTGOMERY is a reporter for *The Buffalo News.*

Serbian bargain hunting.

FIRE SALE

By Anna Husarska

BELI MANASTIR, OCCUPIED CROATIA

"Exchange villa with garden in enemy territory for house with barn ten miles behind the front line." Not exactly a promising real estate ad—even if you're a Serbian living in Croatia. Newspapers in Belgrade now refer to the Serbian reorganization of Croatia as a form of colonization, a coercive real estate switch on a massive scale. Serbia currently occupies about one-third of Croatian territory and is resettling thousands of Serbs in empty houses left by Croats who were forced (or fearful enough) to flee those parts of Croatia seized by the Yugoslav National Army, known as the JNA.

Under this resettlement the Serb Popović family was transferred from its villa with garden in Grubisno Polje (Eastern Croatia) to a house with barn in a little village outside Beli Manastir in Serb-occupied Croatia. They do not sound very happy about the move. They liked their villa better and see no use for the barn and livestock since both husband and wife are clerks. The dishes are fine, although they are not theirs, but the kitchen appliances are rather primitive. (Not that it matters: the Croat utility company has stopped supplying energy to these occupied territories.)

The former owners, Croat farmers by the name of Gladović, fled in August, leaving everything behind. Some of their household goods are used by the Popovićs; the rest are stashed in one room. "We will return things when they come back," says Mrs. Popović. But the civil defense chief of the village swears he will never allow them back. He claims the Gladovićs were Ustashas, and that they kept arms and blacklists of Serbs to be killed. Later he mentions that Gladović was his classmate.

It appears that in addition to being the bloodiest conflict in Europe since World War II, the Serbo-Croat war will result in the largest transfer of population since 1945, when millions of Poles were shifted from territories taken over by the Soviet Union to those recaptured from the Germans. This time, however, the transfer is contained in the territory of what was once one country—if never a nation. According to the International Red Cross there are at present more than half a million displaced people with Yugoslav passports, mostly from within the administrative borders of Croatia. Several hundred refugees cross into Hungary daily; others flee to ethnically more homogeneous and war-free parts of Croatia, or to Serbia, depending on their nationality; still others are

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resettled in newly "liberated" zones like those around Beli Manastir.

The Serbian resettlement plan provokes outrage among intellectuals in Belgrade. Milovan Djilas, a former Tito aide, told me it is a scheme by the Milosević government to obtain a de facto majority of Serbians in the disputed zones and then, in future negotiations, to present the Croat side with a fait accompli. Konstantin Obradović, a specialist in international law, simply grabbed the Geneva Convention from his bookshelf and read Chapter 4, Article 49: "The Occupying Power shall not deport or transfer parts of its own civilian population into territory that it occupies." Tania Petovar, a human rights activist, had no doubt it was a preparation for a future referendum about changing the borders.

"It's just a temporary measure," insists Brana Crncević, head of Srbska Matica, a sort of World Serb Congress that once legitimately helped Serbian exiles around the world. Crncević now claims to help Serbian refugees who escaped "genocide" at the hands of the Croats. He maintains that his organization has nothing to do with the resettlement plan. When I ask how the refugees knew about the empty houses in occupied Croatia, Crncević (who doubles as a poet) says that a bird's instinct tells the Serbs that a nest awaits them somewhere.

Situated in northeastern occupied Croatia between the rivers Drava and Danube, Baranja and the villages around Beli Manastir are the main host area for this colonization. A provisional Serbian government for Baranja, Slavonija, and Western Srem has been set up and operates from Erdut, a small town a few miles from the Unity and Brotherhood Bridge (the name is now even less appropriate than it was in peacetime) over the Danube that is still theoretically the Serbo-Croatian border in this area.

It was there that our car was stopped by the JNA and we were asked for permits. My colleagues from Swedish television had obtained theirs and drove off, but I was stopped. Ten days before I had called the Serbian Information Ministry to get a permit for the combat zone. "From which publication?" asked the woman. "Well actually, I am not a staff member, but I write for THE NEW REPUBLIC." "Which new republic? We don't need no new republics here." "No, no. Not a 'new republika'—TNR, Washington, America . . . " I never got a permit.

So here I was at the checkpoint arguing with the JNA soldiers in broken Serbo-Croatian about unity and brotherhood. Finally they let me go to Erdut to meet the provisional prime minister, Goran Hadzić. Walking toward the town I could hear shooting on the left side of the deserted road, in evident defiance of the fourteenth cease-fire, declared that day. (The town of Osijek, under attack by the JNA, was fifteen miles away.) In the fields on my right a few tanks were digging themselves in, like sparrows taking sand baths. This region is one of the most fertile in Croatia, but corn is still not harvested, and the historical Turkish turret in Erdut is again a military weapon.

In his temporary headquarters, Hadzić told me he did not know who organized the resettlement or how many people were involved: "There is a lot of confusion and it is difficult to get exact figures." Twice during our conversation he described himself as "a convinced democrat." He also mentioned that only "over his dead body" will Vukovar be a Croat town again.

In Beli Manastir, twenty miles north of Erdut, Zelko Cengija from the Serbian Red Cross said that seventeen villages around this town have been completely or partially abandoned by Croats since the JNA seized the area. Ignoring the reason for their flight, he said he was sorry that in spite of ten daily radio appeals issued over the course of a month the Croats didn't come back. Their livestock and crops have to be taken care of, so, for humanitarian reasons, he is helping to resettle Serbs here. In recent weeks 5,000 of them moved from twenty-seven villages, destroyed by the "Ustasha fascists" (i.e., Croats). He said he needs some 6,000 more Serbs to move in here. I asked him about the future status of Baranja: Will it be Croat again? "The faith of this land should be determined in a referendum of those living here. But it should be done later on. Now, with the resettlement, the situation is too hectic."

ANNA HUSARSKA is a frequent contributor to TNR.

HALLE POSTCARD

NAZI HUNTING

By Ian Buruma

Sitting in a squatter house in the eastern German city of Halle, a house that smelled of sweat and stale beer, listening to a chubby ex-cook spouting neo-Nazi propaganda, leafing through a pamphlet honoring Rudolf Hess, and being bossed about by another blond boy in leather trousers and suspenders who called himself a *Gauleiter*—and all this on the anniversary of the Kristallnacht pogrom of 1938—I thought of Rimbaud's words in the African desert: "What am I doing here?"

It all started with a newspaper article that had appeared the previous week. According to this article, on November 9, the anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall as well as of Kristallnacht and the failed Hitler putsch of 1923, neo-Nazis from all over Germany would gather in Halle to commemorate the occasion. Reason enough, I thought, to check out the action.

Like all former GDR cities, Halle stinks of brown coal and chemical pollution. The air is so bad it makes your

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eyes water. The place also looks as though it were just bombed: fine old houses stand in ruin, windows are blown out, roofs have caved in, and the streets are full of holes. But for the brand-new shops, mostly west German chain stores, it feels a bit like walking around a huge studio backlot for a film set in 1945. The strange atmosphere is intensified by the graffiti: "Nazis Out!" "Destroy the Nazis!" "Kill the Fascists!"

Shops, cafés, and restaurants were all locked up on November 9. The people were frightened, we were told, frightened of Nazis. After we knocked for a long time at the door of a coffee shop, the burly owner let us in briefly. He had a gun on his counter. "You never know what might happen here," he said. "It wasn't like this under Honecker," muttered a man in a thick overcoat, as he plunged a knife into a thick Thuringian sausage.

It seemed as though the town were under police occupation. Every street and square was blocked off by cops. Armored vehicles with water cannon patrolled the main streets. Riot squads and border police were putting up barricades. On the market square, in front of the handsome old church, wild-eyed "anti-fascists," belonging to the Spartakist League, screamed: "Out! Out! Out! Nazis out!" Leaflets were handed out, warning the burghers that another Kristallnacht was at hand. Nervous citizens crowded round the new mayor, a tall man from west Germany who towered over the people like a teacher in the midst of his charges. He had the patient voice of a dedicated schoolmaster.

"Why are those Nazis allowed to come and demonstrate here?" asked one irate citizen. "Why can't they be banished?" That, after all, was how troublemakers were dealt with before. "Well," explained the mayor, "we are living in a democracy now, and as long as they don't use violence, they can come and say what they want, even if we don't agree with them. That is what it means to have rule of law." An elderly man with thick glasses would have none of this: "That's how Adolf came to power. It's just like in 1932. They let it happen then too. Ach, what rule of law!"

The only thing lacking in all this commotion of nervous citizens, hysterical anti-fascists, and busy riot policemen were the Nazis themselves. They were nowhere to be seen, or heard. One only heard about them. About the thousands who were gathering as we spoke; about the squatter house, occupied by the "*Gauleiter*" and his followers, who were about to attack foreigners with Molotov cocktails and knives.

So we went to the local police headquarters to find out where the Nazis were. The press officer was an overweight man with a soft baby mouth and cowboy boots. He couldn't tell us where the Nazis were but promised that the *Einsatzgruppen* stood ready. This was reassuring but not helpful.

Perhaps the Nazi squatter house was a better place to ask. I had hoped to see the *Gauleiter*. Instead his mother came out, surrounded by a group of thin, blond teenagers. She told us that Thomas, the *Gauleiter*, was in town demonstrating, but we might want to come back for a "press conference" in the evening.

It was all rather disappointing and we were ready to give up our quest, when we suddenly heard a familiar sound, familiar, that is, from countless newsreels and films: "*Sieg Heil! Sieg Heil! Sieg Heil!*" The sound came from a square not far from the city center. It was one of those squares that had not changed since the war: spooky, red-brick, turn-of-the-century houses, now black with grime; dark, uninviting cafés; faces peering furtively through lace curtains, hoping to see but not to be involved. There they were at last: the Nazis! About 200 of them. Not many, compared with the 1,500 policemen mobilized to check them, but Nazis nonetheless. Or at least they looked the part.

There were boys with Hitler hairdos, with shaved backs and sides. There were teenagers in black boots. There was an old, shabby man who handed out signatures. There was a girl in black uniform and white "folkish" socks, who had dyed her dark hair blond. There were speeches about reconquering Great Germany, from Cologne to Königsberg (formerly Kaliningrad). And there was the usual stuff about Germany for the Germans, free from the polluting presence of aliens. November 9, 1989, was remembered because, "It was us, the youth of Germany, that defeated communism," and the same date in 1938 was commemorated not for the Kristallnacht, but for the murder of the German diplomat Von Rath by "the Jew" Grynzspan, which served as its excuse.

The crowd had listened to all this in a rather passive state. They had heard it all before, and it was getting cold. Then a young man shouted, "Out! Out! Out! Foreigners out!" and the crowd showed signs of life. The boys in leather bellowed, the girl in white socks screamed: "Out! Out! Out! Foreigners Out! *Sieg Heil! Sieg Heil!*" For a brief moment there was joy in their eyes.

It was an unpleasant sight, but not an especially frightening one. The whole thing was so theatrical, so paltry, so, well, old-fashioned, that it was difficult to take these young people seriously. The fact that they were German, behaving this way in Germany, and not French rowdies in France, was the main reason for all the fuss. To be sure, some of the young men looked menacing, and no doubt, in packs, on the prowl for foreigners, they were.

Although German neo-Nazis, on the whole, are not noted for their sense of humor, some of them might actually have been aware of the absurdity of their charade. Later that day the *Gauleiter* ushered us in to the "press conference" with the words: "Come in, remove your clothes, and get ready for the showers." It was a bad joke, but somehow in keeping with the grotesque atmosphere of the whole occasion. These people could cause trouble, on dark nights, in sooty cities. But it is difficult to imagine how they could take over anything much bigger than a squatter house.

And, by the way, I forgot to mention this: the main speaker was a pasty-faced Austrian.

IAN BURUMA, a writer and journalist, is a fellow of the Wissenschaftskolleg in Berlin.

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A neoliberal economic cure.

INVEST

By Robert Shapiro

This winter's discontent over the recession has sparked predictable reactions. From liberals come proposals for huge investments in public works, more regulation, and trade protections for major industries. From supply-side conservatives comes the message that the economy needs more tax cuts, focused this time on investors and savers. Standing outside it all is the White House, committed to the ancestral Republican faith that no prescription at all is the best economic prescription.

All of them seem oblivious to the dynamic disorder of the new world economy—an economy in which South Korean computer makers use state-of-the-art German technology to design systems for a segment of the American market, and any developed country can purchase another's resources to meet demand somewhere else. They also seem oblivious to the long-term consequences of the policies of both sides: two decades of the slowest gains in GNP, productivity, and incomes since the Great Depression. They all say that what matters is having the most capital, the best technologies, even the best-run companies. It's true, but less so as the world economy easily moves money and machines across borders and large corporations become global enterprises. What they haven't figured out is how government and business can best use the assets we don't share with others—workers, physical plant, and public resources—in ways that help us respond quickly and imaginatively to fast-changing world markets.

The first element of such a strategy is to stop setting economic policy by the cues from powerful special interests—the stream of tax, spending, and trade subsidies that encrust our economy. The second element is to reform radically the ways we educate children and train workers. And third, we must discipline the public sector to free up capital and to expand the supply of public economic goods, mainly communications and transportation systems.

This strategy is a synthesis of right and left that goes beyond both. From conservatives comes the knowledge that competition garners better economic results than politicians and lobbyists, because competition compels managers and workers to innovate. From liberals comes the recognition that most wealth is produced by ordinary workers, and that at a time when success depends on producing high-value goods and services, workers and managers alike have to be given the means to be more productive.

Start by getting rid of "incentives" for growth—the webs of Republican investment tax breaks, Democratic trade protections, and bipartisan spending subsidies. Basic economics suggests why the use of tax, spending, trade, and regulatory subsidies slows growth. In every case the so-called incentive—tax breaks for real estate, subsidies for agriculture and forestry, trade protections for textiles and autos, and regulatory subsidies for medicine and law—provides some industry with an artificially higher rate of return. This draws investment away from other sectors, retarding their capacity to innovate and attract other resources, notably skilled workers. Over time these incentives even cripple those favored by them, allowing them to succeed for a while without taking steps to become more productive. There's a relationship, in short, between the decline in our rates of economic growth and the government wrapping the economy with layer on layer of tax incentives, spending subsidies, and trade protections.

There's also a connection to the peculiar income developments of recent years. While average people's incomes grew by 3 percent over the past decade, the richest 1 percent saw their incomes rise by more than 90 percent. One powerful reason was that the top 1 percent own vast capital assets, the value of which increased when tax incentives artificially raised their rate of return. The old strategy increases the value of existing wealth without creating much new wealth.

The second element in a new strategy requires radical educational reforms to prepare young people for the marketplace. The authority of central school boards and administrators to stymie change should be tamed; public school choice should be implemented, in which funding follows children to public schools chosen by their parents for their records in educating students. For the half of all young people who do not go to college, we need smart training. Young Americans in the Gulf war, most without college degrees but all trained in hard skills, proved that focused training works; now every school district should establish apprenticeship programs jointly run by local high schools and businesses, much like Germany's. Throw in a scheme to give college assistance to anyone willing to pay for it by pledging either two years of civilian or military national service or a small share of their future incomes.

An advanced economy needs to enable everyone to improve his or her performance throughout life. U.S. firms today spend the equivalent of 1.5 percent of their payroll costs on formal training, only modestly less than our economic rivals—but 70 percent of the training money goes to the top 10 percent of employees, the same managers and professionals who nearly alone made strong income gains over the past decade. Moreover, many companies don't offer training at all, figuring that after making the investment, a worker

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can leave and a competitor would benefit. The government can require that every company invest an amount equal to at least 1.5 percent of annual payroll in ongoing training, as do most European countries, and that every employee has a right to take advantage of his or her share every year. In this way the productivity effects can be systemic; and employers will know that when trained workers leave, those who replace them were trained by other firms.

The third element of a new economic strategy takes us inside government. Before all else, there's the budget deficit. The fast-growing incomes of wealthy people include room for higher taxes, but not enough to dent a $350 billion deficit. The only option is to discipline spending. What matters here is that the share of our national income used for public purposes increase no faster than the economy. To make this discipline meaningful to most voters, Washington should adopt a rule that federal spending grow no faster than an average taxpayer's ability to pay for it. In technical terms the growth rate of public spending should be capped so it does not exceed the growth rate of per capita income in the year before, except during recessions and wartime. This rule would allow spending to increase by about $75 billion a year in the 1990s—and provide enough discipline to cut the deficit by two-thirds in five years and virtually eliminate it by 1999.

Add a sensible proposal to regulate how government spends money. Washington should divide the budget into an investment account covering spending that generates direct economic returns—education, training, basic research, and infrastructure—and a consumption account for everything else, from transfer payments to government operations. Eventually all consumption-related spending should be covered by current taxes, limiting the deficit to our net investments. Over the next four years the share dedicated to common investments should rise sharply from its present 9 percent of the budget. We can begin by redeploying obsolete defense spending to transportation and communications R&D and education and training. More resource-shifting can come by ending some $30 billion in inefficient spending subsidies and countless more for ineffective programs. Congress should enact a blanket sunset law, requiring that every program be reviewed at least once every ten years, and be either reauthorized or allowed to expire automatically.

The executive branch should apply to its bureaucracy the standard for healthy productivity gains in business: 3 percent a year. The $200 billion annual budget for personnel and administration could be cut by 3 percent a year, with every office and agency allowed to develop a strategy for carrying out its tasks with fewer resources. What of the issue dominating Washington today: middle-class tax cuts? Just fix the rates. Cut the 15 percent rate to 13.5 percent and cut the 28 percent rate to 26.5 percent. Next, preserve the 31 percent rate for taxable income between $78,000 and $150,000. Then cover the revenue loss by adding a 38.5 percent rate for income above $150,000.

A strategy like the one I just outlined makes it possible to imagine the best of both liberal and conservative worlds. Open the economy to change, clean up the affairs of government, effectively educate and train everyone, invest in common goods, and promote private investment, and in time the United States could again generate enough growth to support both our public ambitions and lower taxes on individuals and business. All it requires is a measure of public honesty and a willingness to leave tired ideological debates behind us.

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The view from the right.

RELAX

By Jonathan Rauch

At this moment the Washington debate over American economic policy is more sadly out of touch than it has been for years. The trouble is that everyone is arguing about ways to fix the economy. What actually needs fixing is not the economy but the government's economic policy, which is not at all the same thing.

Now for the sad part: practically everyone has known for years how to improve economic policies. But they aren't getting fixed, and they're probably not going to be. Talking about them is too utterly boring, and fixing them too annoyingly painful. In Washington it's inherently a lot more fun to fix the economy with new government policies than to fix the existing government policies. So we're stuck.

To see what I mean, it's important to separate the short-run, cyclical worry—the economy's current listlessness—from the structural policies that affect longer-term growth. What to do about each?

The cyclical question is what Congress and the White House should do to stimulate the economy. Here's the answer: nothing. Now is the time for brave men and women to take a nap. There are three reasons. First, the economy isn't robust, but it's hardly in a state of crisis. Despite all the groaning, this isn't the Great Depression. The latest forecast of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development looks for 2.6 per-

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cent U.S. growth next year: not particularly good, but not very bad either. Unemployment in October was barely any higher than its average rate during the 1983-90 expansion. Second, it would be a year from now before a fiscal stimulus could be enacted and implemented—maybe in time to help incumbents through the elections, but in other respects too late. Third, most of the proposals that have surfaced are bad. They either involve increasing the deficit, thus attacking the short-term problem by aggravating the much more serious long-term problem, or else are deficit-neutral, in which case they provide no stimulus at all. Besides, hasty pump-priming efforts are an open invitation to do legislative mischief, particularly in the form of ramshackle programs and bizarre new tax loopholes or regulations. The Senate's recent mad dash to cap credit card interest rates was a classic example.

It may seem hard to believe right now that the economy isn't broken. But the recession isn't a structural breakdown; it's a part of the business cycle, which we still haven't figured out how to repeal. Though painful, the economic adjustment shows that the economy is working. It is slow partly because the notorious 1980s excesses of debt are at last coming down; corporations reduced their interest payments by $6 billion in the first half of 1991, reports *Business Week*, and consumer debt has declined by 10 percent in the last year. Cost-cutting has squeezed up productivity. Moreover, though few in Washington seem to have noticed, inflation is down to about 3 percent, from more than twice that rate a year ago—an important gain that lays the groundwork for future expansion.

The only really serious problem with the economy is the slow growth in productivity and incomes since about 1973. That's a separate issue from the current cyclical downturn, and it's not a problem that anyone understands very well, much less knows how to solve. "Solutions" abound: a tax cut here, a government investment program there, a technology policy somewhere else. Some of these plans have merit, but most of them would have only marginal effects and many, beginning with the capital-gains tax break, look suspiciously like programs to put money in the pocket of whoever is proposing them.

The best thing for Washington to do, then, is to straighten out its own policy mistakes. Everyone knows what needs to be done:

Clean up the tax code. Make it simpler and less riddled with loopholes and subsidies; it needs to stop encouraging debt and consumption over saving and investment. The 1986 tax reform was a major achievement, but there's more to be done. The deductions for home mortgages and for employer-provided health care, the subsidies for the debt and the double-taxation of dividends—all have been causing serious economic distortions for years. Alas, all are sacred. Meanwhile, Republicans in Congress are now advocating bills to give further tax subsidies for middle-class health care, just what we don't need at a time when health care costs consume 12 percent of GNP and are rising.

Obtain and approve a serious trade agreement at the current talks in Geneva. Progress against trade barriers and subsidies throughout the world is one of the most important things that can be done to improve growth prospects—not only for the United States and other developed nations, but also for the Third World.

Slash government indemnities for the middle class. With deposit insurance, loan guarantees, corporate bailouts, farm programs, tax subsidies, and more, the government assumes the risk for private investment decisions while the investors reap any rewards. This is asking for trouble, and a lot of it: in 1990 taxpayers were standing behind privately held loans and securities of $6 *trillion.* The place to begin making reforms is with deposit insurance, so that depositors assume at least some of the risk when they make risky investments, and so that taxpayers' exposure is reduced. Otherwise financial institutions will keep gambling with taxpayers' money, or they'll be regulated to death in an attempt to stop them. But the middle class likes unlimited deposit insurance. Scaling it back is so unpopular that it's the one banking reform that Washington is *not* considering.

Reduce the budget deficit. By running large deficits, the government grabs a third of the already small national savings pool and burns it up on consumption. Not only is this economically stupid for anyone who doesn't expect to be dead soon, it is cynical and immoral because it imposes tax increases on people who are not yet born. All of this is freely admitted on all sides. But the deficit persists, because the people like it. Getting rid of it means reducing middle-class entitlement programs, raising taxes, or (preferably) both. The public votes against politicians who do either.

Redress the imbalance between old and young. The elderly are the *least* poor age group. Yet they're by far the most heavily favored by public policy. A person who retires this year at age 65 with average earnings gets from Social Security and Medicare more than twice what he or she invested in it (including inflation and interest). In 1990 a staggering 46 percent of every federal dollar spent on domestic programs went to the elderly, up from 32 percent in 1965. Between 1978 and 1987 federal spending on the elderly (in constant dollars) grew by 52 percent; over the same period spending on children, which is only a fifth as large, declined by 4 percent. One can go on and on with these numbers. According to Rudolph G. Penner, who used to be director of the Congressional Budget Office, if you subtract from federal domestic, non-interest spending all the pension programs (Social Security and Medicare are the big ones), what's left over—everything else the government does—is smaller as a share of GNP than in *1940.* It's all well and good to provide for the aged, but any serious attempt to better the lot of children—most important, through deficit reduction—is impossible without sharply restraining the growth of subsidies for the elderly. Don't look to Washington,

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though. The elderly vote; the children don't.

There is much to do besides fixing skewed government policies, of course. The national infrastructure could use improving. Americans need to be better educated; it's very wasteful for companies to teach and supervise employees who can't calculate or read instructions. Crime and dishonesty must somehow be reduced; both are enormously expensive in economic as well as moral terms. So is the massive loss of labor and talent forgone to crime, above and beyond the costs to victims. The rise of female-headed families, which are six times likelier to be poor, is perhaps the most alarming problem of all.

But none of these moral problems is easily solved by economic remedies—nor will they be anytime soon. No doubt Washington can find ways to be helpful. But before it goes out trying to fix the economy or repair the moral fabric, it ought to fix itself.

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A liberal economic program.

SPEND

By Paul Krugman

After eleven years in effect, the conservative economic program has failed. Most Americans are no better or even worse off than in the 1970s, and our long-term prospects are bleaker than ever. Supply-siders claim, of course, that their program was never really implemented, just as Marxists claim that the system that collapsed in Eastern Europe wasn't "true" socialism. In reality, however, Ronald Reagan got most of what he asked for, and delivered none of what he promised.

Now what? The following is a wish list of what a new economic program *ought* to include, regardless of its political feasibility. It's a liberal program in the narrow sense that it presumes that the government can do positive things not only for society but for the economy as well. It's also a conservative program in the non-political sense—that is, the sums of money involved are not large relative to the size of our problems. The irresponsible radicals who now call themselves conservatives will, of course, denounce my wish list as familiar tax-and-spend stuff. But taxing and spending is how the government does its job.

This is not, by the way, a cure for the recession, for which even George Bush is blameless. In this country recessions are almost entirely the responsibility of the Federal Reserve. Neither the recession that defeated Jimmy Carter nor the recession that just might defeat Bush was the president's fault. Conversely, of course, the recovery that allowed Reagan to claim it was "morning in America" had nothing to do with him either. We will eventually pull out of this recession, but the administration will have played little role in it.

The record we need to improve on is the longer trend: the dismaying performance of the U.S. economy from 1979, the year before Carter's recession, to 1989, the year before Bush's. My proposals are all aimed at doing what the conservative program did not: creating an environment to reverse this record in the long run and to share the benefits fairly all round.

At the core of my program is spending money in three major areas: child care, education, and infrastructure, all areas in which public spending is a form of investment in the future. Although political rhetoric for the past decade has extolled the virtues of private investment, the statistical evidence suggests that education and infrastructure are just as important in promoting economic growth. In international comparisons, education predicts economic growth better than private investment. Here at home the stagnation of American productivity after the early 1970s was not associated with any decline in private investment, which remained stable at about 18 percent of GNP; it *was* associated with declining SAT scores and sharply reduced *public* investment.

The biggest single problem that America faces is the state of its children. The statistics are familiar: 20 percent are in poverty; a much larger fraction pass through poverty at some point or grow up on the edge of it. At the same time there's good evidence that a variety of early intervention programs, ranging from prenatal care to Head Start, benefit not just their recipients but the public at large. It's crazy that we don't make such programs available to every child who needs them. Full funding of Head Start would cost some $6 billion; a broad range of child care programs could be funded for perhaps $10 billion to $15 billion. The eventual benefits, even in purely economic terms, would almost surely be large.

American children are among the worst educated in the industrial world. In international comparisons of math and science skills, they score at the bottom of the pack. Money alone will not solve the problem, but more money is needed. Teachers' salaries are far below those of occupations that require comparable skill, while increased equality between women and men has deprived the schools of a cheap pool of labor they could once exploit. The social troubles of our cities have greatly complicated the task of education. Financially strapped state and local governments are visibly savaging their educational systems. A real education president would provide substantial resources—say $20 billion—to help school districts in need provide for the basics.

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The big-ticket item is infrastructure. From 1948 to 1969 the "core infrastructure" of the United States (roads, airports, water and sewage, etc.) grew at 3.7 percent per year. In the 1970s that figure fell to 2 percent; and from 1979 to 1987 it was 1.3 percent. Why do we need more roads and airports? Because our society is growing, and our metropolitan areas are being transformed by the growth of "edge cities": new subcenters of economic activity far from the traditional downtowns, generating whole new patterns of commuting and living. If we fail to support them with the necessary facilities, our economy becomes snarled in traffic jams—which are all the worse because we've slashed public investment so much that even our existing infrastructure is decaying. A reasonable price for such investment would be around $60 billion. While you're at it, throw in some support for our beleaguered high-technology industry, in the form of joint research projects, loan guarantees, and possibly some fancy infrastructure building (a national "data highway" is one possibility). Cost this at something like $5 billion to $10 billion.

Put all of this together and you have a spending program of perhaps as much as $100 billion annually, or a little more than 1.5 percent of GNP. Add such other desirable things as national health insurance and reducing the deficit, and an old-style liberal economic program could require resources equal to, say, 2.5 percent of GNP. Some of that can come from the peace dividend. For the rest, we need to turn to the unpleasant side of the program.

Two of the three unpleasant proposals for the U.S. economy will raise money for the government, although only one is primarily a revenue measure. The third will cost money in the short run but save much more in the long run.

For most Americans the lower taxes that were promised never materialized. Lower income taxes were offset by higher Social Security contributions and higher state and local taxes. For the very well-off, however, taxes have been cut dramatically since the late 1970s, while the share of income accruing to them has soared. These tax cuts in effect forfeited large sums of potential revenue. Estimates suggest that at 1977 tax rates the top 1 percent of the population would currently pay more than $80 billion in additional taxes—and still be better off than they were a decade ago. In general, restoring some progressivity to the tax system could yield $80 billion to $100 billion in revenues. Won't this redistributionist program destroy incentives? No. Its aim is not redistribution for its own sake, but the need for resources to meet real needs, resources that can best be provided by those who have benefited the most (indeed, have lately been the *only* ones to benefit) from the growth those resources can sustain.

At the same time, we can improve incentives while *gaining* revenue by charging realistic prices for the use of scarce common resources that are being handed out well below cost to small interest groups. The fee that loggers pay to utilize federally owned forests, for example, often fails to cover even the costs incurred by the Forest Service for making the trees accessible. Farmers in the desert pay a price for their publicly supplied water that is usually below the cost of supplying it and ignores the hidden burden imposed both on the environment and on water-short urban consumers (who pay a far higher price). Corporate jets with two or three passengers pay minimal charges to land at crowded airports, creating delays for commercial flights that carry hundreds. Our supposedly free market economy is riddled with such examples. It's puzzling that the Reagan-Bush administrations never made eliminating these distorted incentives a priority.

My final suggestion is a recapitalization of the banks. Bush's plan for bank reform didn't go nearly far enough. The basic problem of our financial system is not the lack of interstate banking; it is that bankers have an incentive to take bad risks, since it is heads they win, tails the FDIC loses. Until the 1980s this incentive did not cause too many problems because—thanks to government restrictions on competition—banking was such a profitable business that few bankers were tempted to gamble with their lucrative franchises. Nowadays, however, many banks have only paper-thin capital—that is, the value of their deposits and other debt is nearly as large as, or in some cases larger than, the value of their assets. This makes the incentive to gamble irresistible—indeed, banks that do not take undue risks cannot compete with those that do.

The only way to solve this problem is to require the owners of banks to put much more of their own money at stake—to raise capital requirements to levels far above what anyone is willing to talk about. Banks hate this idea; worse still, some banks will be unable to raise the capital and will have to be seized and recapitalized with public funds. Yet if we don't do this, the S&L mess will turn out to be only the first reel in an ongoing disaster film.

What will all of this accomplish? My wish list would do little to raise the U.S. growth rate over the next four or even eight years. Programs for children will not pay off economically until their targets enter the labor force; and investment in infrastructure, getting the prices of scarce resources right, and even eliminating the bad incentives in our financial system will take years to yield major fruits. The eventual payoffs, however, will be large. Two decades of short-termism in government (for Reagan did not begin the process) have damaged our economy but also created opportunities. Think of the U.S. economy as a "handyman special"—a house that has been neglected and looks awful, but that with a moderate amount of repair work can be radically improved. Nobody knows how to guarantee an economic miracle, but sometimes a new furnace and a fresh coat of paint can work wonders.

PAUL KRUGMAN, professor of economics at MIT, is author of *The Age of Diminished Expectations: U.S. Economic Policy in the 1990s* (MIT Press).

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The Israeli immigrants with nowhere else to go.

NEW WAVE

By Hillel Halkin

TEL AVIV

There is little drama these days in the arrival of Soviet Jews in Israel. Within minutes after their plane touches down, the first of them are already filing quietly with their hand luggage into the waiting room set aside for them at Ben-Gurion Airport. Their faces are guarded: here and there a smile or an apprehensive glance, but none of the visible excitement, the confusion, or the simple wonderment that might be expected from people who have just dropped from the sky into their new home. They are given soft drinks and sandwiches, bags of candy for the children, and a businesslike talk on the procedure that awaits them. They listen attentively but less than raptly, as if they have heard it all before. One wonders if they would seem out of place being lectured to by a dull tour guide in Venice. Yes, they would: tourists do not travel with their dogs. It is rumored that all these poodles and dachshunds are bought before departure for resale in Israel, but they snuggle too implausibly in their owners' arms to be mere four-legged currency.

The newcomers are called in alphabetical order. A Russian-speaking clerk of the Ministry of Immigration registers them, issues them an immigrant passbook, and inquires where they intend to go from the airport. Some 60 percent name the apartments of relatives or friends; the remainder choose a hotel from a nationwide list. They are then issued a taxi voucher for their designation and an initial sum of money—a family of three gets approximately 6,000 shekels (about $2,500), a third of it in cash—and go to collect their baggage.

There is no ceremony, no fuss, and, as far as one can see, not a word on anyone's part that might be misconstrued as Zionism. No doubt this spares embarrassment. It is hardly a secret that most Soviet Jews currently arriving in Israel would rather have been stepping off the plane somewhere else. Throughout the 1980s, in fact, when their numbers were small enough for Western countries to accept them, 90 percent ended up elsewhere, mostly in the United States.

Paradoxically, this is what makes this least Zionist of all immigrations to Israel the most Zionist. For wherein lay the real novelty of Zionism when it was first presented to the world a century ago? It was not in the belief that Jews should live again in their own country, or even that Jews *would* live again in their own country, but rather that Jews *would have to* live again in their own country. Theodor Herzl accurately predicted that the actual return to Zion would be caused less by *Hibat Tsiyyon*, "Love of Zion," than by objective circumstances more powerful than man's emotions or desires. Herzl believed the key would be economic, since it was the competition between a nascent Jewish bourgeoisie and the rising middle classes of Europe, and between Jewish and native intelligentsia fighting for the same jobs, that fueled modern anti-Semitism and necessitated Jewish migration. The combination of anti-Semitism and economic pressure, Herzl believed, would drive the Jews from those countries, largely in Eastern Europe, that were less liberal and advanced and eventually shut them out from those that were more so.

The current flow of Soviet Jews to Israel is a classic fulfillment of Herzl's prediction—far more so than the mass migration to Israel of Jews from Arab lands in the late 1940s and early '50s, or even of German Jews in the 1930s, to which it bears a considerable resemblance. And though Herzl could not have known that the gates of Russia, out of which 3 million Jews streamed between 1881 and 1925, would not open wide again until the 1990s, or that, at the moment they did, Europe and America would be suffering from high unemployment, severe ethnic stress, and hostility to immigration, it was on the assumption of the inevitability of such an exclusion that much of his case for Zionism rested.

Nor would Herzl have been surprised by the public Jew-baiting that came to flourish in the Soviet Union under a regime that had begun with a real commitment to combating anti-Semitism, or by the academic and professional quotas employed against Soviet Jews in the pre-perestroika years, which were a major cause of the first wave of Jewish emigration. Indeed, the quick rise and decline of Soviet Jews under communism strikes one as a condensed recapitulation of much of Jewish history in the Diaspora. Just as the Jews of Poland were invited to settle there in medieval times because they were useful in performing mercantile functions the local population was ill-equipped for, so

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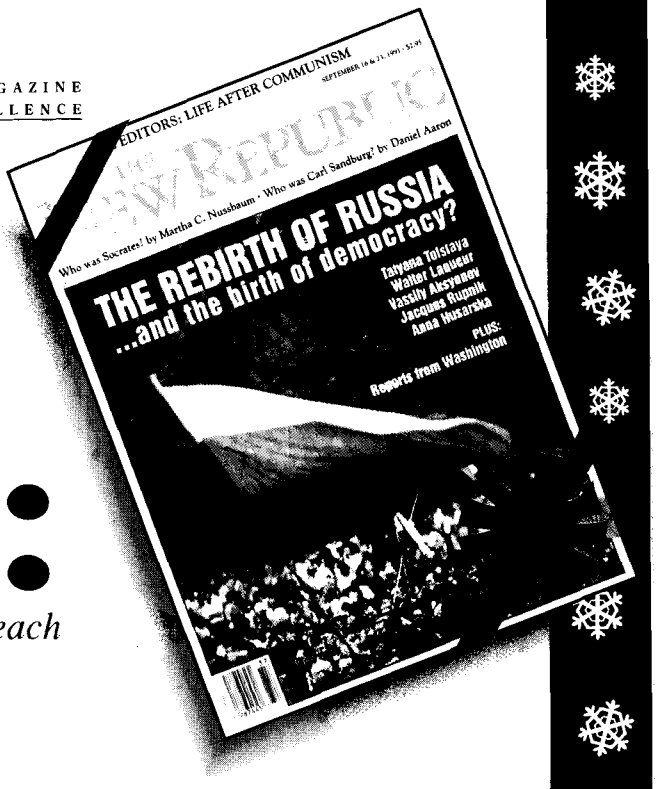

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Jews were encouraged under Lenin and the early Stalin to occupy administrative and professional posts in the Bolshevik power structure for which there were insufficient non-Jewish cadres. And just as in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries anti-Semitism functioned as a lever to pry Jews from economic roles that native Poles were ready to assume, so it served during the later Stalin and Brezhnev years to justify their systematic exclusion from leadership positions in the Communist Party, and then from the Soviet managerial and scientific establishments. Today the quotas are largely gone and Jewish entrepreneurial skills may enable Jews to take quicker advantage of the shift to a market economy than others. But in an economy of scarcity, as Herzl would have been quick to point out, this is likely to result in yet another anti-Jewish reaction.

What motivates Soviet Jews to emigrate is more apprehension of the future than an intolerable present, and it varies widely not only among individuals and families, but from place to place. In provincial cities such as Chelyabinsk or Seratov, where shortages are acute, it may be despair at the thought of even greater future scarcity. In Moscow and Leningrad, where right-wing movements are relatively strong, it's more likely the threat of anti-Semitism. In Kiev and its environs, where Ukrainian nationalism—historically violently anti-Semitic—is now seeking Jewish support, there is concern with the aftereffects of Chernobyl, barely 100 kilometers away. In Latvia, Lithuania, and Moldavia, Jewish populations that were culturally identified with the Russian minority fear the backlash of non-Russian majorities. One way or another, I have yet to meet Russian immigrants in Israel who did not feel that they had left a sinking ship. History has given Jews even better reasons than most people to fear anarchy and the collapse of central government, and there is a common belief that this is where the old USSR is heading.

Common to the Russian immigrants too is a monumental ignorance about their own Jewishness. Few have ever been inside a synagogue, celebrated a Jewish holiday, or read a book about Jewish history. If communism succeeded in anything, it was in erasing all knowledge of their tradition from millions of Jews whose grandparents and great-grandparents constituted one of the most Jewishly knowledgeable communities in the world. "What kind of New Year season is this?" a Russian teenager asked me in all seriousness a few days before Yom Kippur. "Where are all the parties?" The one Jewishly educated new immigrant I have met told me how he first found out that he was Jewish. When, as a child on the way home from kindergarten, he gleefully told his embarrassed parents an anti-Semitic joke he had heard from a fellow toddler, he was hustled off the streetcar and told what they had preferred to conceal until then.

Never in Jewish history, except perhaps among certain small groups of Marranos in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, has a community of Jews returned to Jewish life from such an emotional and psychological distance—been resuscitated, one might say, from something close to clinical death. This is an extraordinary vindication of Zionist premises, although one does not see it reflected in the faces of the arriving immigrants or in the matter-of-fact reception they are given. The country has gotten used to them; the flowcharts of their numbers in the newspapers are as daily a fixture as the foreign exchange rates; the politicians are busy with the peace talks; and Israelis are tired of rhetoric and concerned with making ends meet in an economy where unemployment is at a twenty-five-year high and bank accounts are calculated in overdrafts. Meanwhile, the immigrants keep pouring in, if not as fast as a year ago. On the day I visited the airport, 265 arrived on two flights, one from Warsaw and one from Kishinev, slightly below the daily average for recent months.

Some 150,000 Soviet Jews settled in Israel in the early 1970s, when the first liberalization of Jewish emigration took place; another 50,000 settled in the late '70s and '80s, when exit visas were cut back and the "dropout" rate of Jews officially bound for Israel soared; and more than 300,000 since the end of 1989, when the current surge of immigration began. The first of these waves arrived in economic good times and was absorbed with only minor difficulty. (Within four years the average Soviet immigrant family of this period was earning above the median national income.) The second was too small to be noticeable. As for the third, which alone represents an increase of 8 percent in Israel's Jewish population, who is not familiar by now with its stock characters? On one side there are the success stories: the brilliant scientist grabbed at once by a university, the talented actress already performing in Hebrew, the mixed marriage whose non-Jewish partner has taken to Israel like a fish to water. And on the other side, the tragedies: the doctor washing dishes in a restaurant, the symphony violinist playing on street corners, the mining engineer in a country without mines, the disappointed, the embittered, and the desperate.

The truth is it's impossible to generalize about 300,000 people, especially when their situation and moods are highly fluid. Which half of the glass should one look at? The 38 percent of recent immigrants who are unemployed or the 62 percent who have already found work? Nevertheless, the sheer number and sadness of the human problems are overwhelming. Not long ago I spent a morning at the Haifa office of the Soviet Zionist Forum, a national organization that provides free counseling and job placement for Russian immigrants and offers them small, low-interest loans. Here are some of my notes from the brief Hebrew résumés given me by a case worker after each of the Russian interviews she conducted:

1) 56-year-old woman, piano teacher, husband chamb. orch. conductor, f. Zhitomir, w/ manic-depressive daughter in & out of hospital. Husband sweeping streets. (Says he is 'well-treated.') Were supposed to get cheap gov't apt near hospital—must be near daughter, who is

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divorced w. 8-year-old child of her own. (Takes out granddaughter's all-A's report card to show how bright she is.) At last minute apt. fell through. Soon will have nowhere to live. Sad brown eyes.

2) Ph.D. in civ. engineering, without work. Wife something called 'standards engineer,' no work either. Both in 50s. 10 months in country. Paying $600 for Haifa apt. Gov't rent subsidy ends in 2 months. Don't know what to do. I ask: 'Are you sorry you came?' Answer: 'Anything is better than living in Russia.'

3) Tall woman in late 30s, elegantly dressed, lawyer by profession. Husband not Jewish. Have son just turned 18 from husband's first marriage to non-Jewish woman. Were told by Jewish Agency in Russia that boy would have no problems, even though neither biological parent Jewish—now ministry of interior refuses to issue him ID card needed for residence in country. Tears in eyes. Says: 'Life in Russia was hard, but no one threw you out. Here they are throwing our son out.'

4) Divorced woman with small child at home. Husband in Russia. Nurse. Taking free course in hospital to qualify for nurse's license but has no money to pay baby-sitter. Can't bring child with her to hospital. Is afraid will have to stop course. Begins to cry.

5) Stocky middle-aged man wearing baseball cap, says he was well-known author in Russia. Here no one knows who he is. Wants loan to have himself translated into Hebrew. Stricken look of a proud man caught begging.

6) Smiling young man with glasses says he is looking for work as 'theater engineer.' No one in office sure what that is, though it sounds like he may be a prop man. If no one needs theater engineer, he is also ready to work as dog trainer.

It has been argued by critics of the government, both in Israel and abroad, that quite apart from the folly of creating a binational state west of the Jordan, Israel is attempting the impossible by trying to settle the territories and absorb Soviet immigrants at the same time. The country, it's said, does not have the resources to perform both tasks at once, especially if this means forgoing the American loan guarantees on which it has been counting.

This logic begs the question on several counts. One of these is the assumption that it would still be in Israel's interest to take in as many Soviet Jews as possible even if it were not faced with the demographic challenge of the Palestinians in the territories. The case for such an interest is twofold: the utilitarian argument that Soviet immigrants represent a wealth of human capital; and the humanitarian one that Israel must be a haven for Jews in distress. But neither of these arguments necessarily concludes with the current policy to maximize immigration. If it's a question of utility, the country can profit from Soviet Jewish professionals, but only so many; if it's one of rescuing Jews, few Jews in the Soviet Union today are gravely threatened. Should they be, they will come unconditionally. In the end, then, one comes back to demographics. Without the specter of a large Arab minority with a high birth rate that has haunted all Israeli governments, the country undoubtedly would be better off if its Jewish population grew at a more gradual rate. One needn't be cynical about Israel's motives to realize that were the country to rid itself of 2 million Palestinians by returning all the way to its 1967 borders—something most Israelis oppose—it would have less reason to strive for the maximalization of immigration that withdrawing to those borders would facilitate.

Thus, to speak of a clear choice between more territory or more immigrants is an inexact analysis. So is to ascribe the sharp rise of Jews living in the territories to an immigration of which barely 1 percent has settled beyond "the green line," excluding East Jerusalem. Of course, there is some validity in the claim that, by driving up the price of housing within Israel's old borders, Soviet immigration has made cheap homes in the territories, where government land for building is priced lower and other government subsidies are higher, more attractive. But housing was already disproportionately expensive in Israel before the present immigration began, and the flow of Israelis to subsidized suburban settlements on the West Bank predates and would have continued without the flow of Russian Jews to Israel.

Nor can it be assumed that more money, such as the $10 billion spaced over a five-year period that U.S. loan guarantees would provide, would automatically help the immigrants. Take a simple hypothetical case. Soviet Jews are now arriving in Israel at the rate of about 9,000 a month, down 50 percent from a year ago—a drop largely due to reports reaching the USSR of the newcomers' economic troubles. At present an immigrant family of three receives from the government, after the initial allowance at the airport, an "absorption basket" of approximately $7,000 to tide it over its first year, plus several hundred dollars more as a monthly rental subsidy—an amount that is far from enough to get by on if at least one parent is not working. All told, these allowances cost the national treasury some $400 million annually. Suppose that dollar loans enabled this budget item to be increased by 50 percent. At first our family would receive 50 percent more too, but as word of this got back home, immigration might revive. If it reached the level of a year ago, each family would go back to receiving the same amount it gets now. Without the kind of real growth in the economy that has little to do with immigration policies and everything to do with sweeping economic changes that the Israeli government has been postponing, no one would be appreciably better off.

The Soviet immigrants themselves are the last who need to be convinced that the solution is not government remittances. The more of them one gets to know, the more impressed one is by how few seem to think Israel owes them anything more than the chance to work hard and get ahead on their own. Seventy years of communism have convinced them of the advantages of private enterprise. I was sitting one day with new neighbors of mine, Boris

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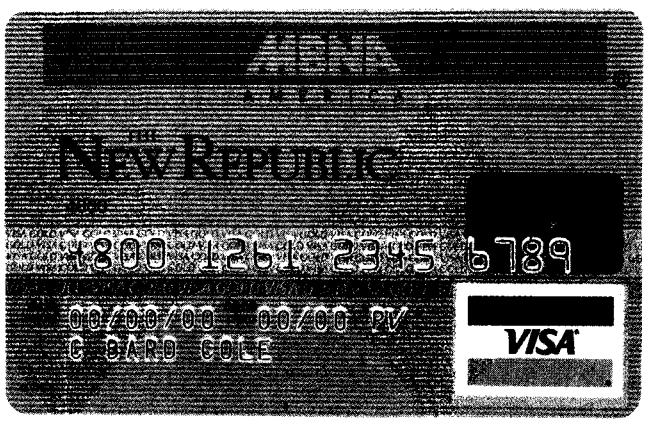

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and Alexandra, both engineers from Kiev. Alexandra, a woman with a smile so optimistic that I never know whether to believe her when she says she wants to return to Russia, had just given up a part-time job mopping floors at the bus depot to concentrate on taking in sewing; Boris works in the bakery of a hotel, where he is supposed to be paid five shekels an hour—slightly more than $2—for an eight-hour day. The trouble is, his boss often expects him to put in up to fourteen hours for no extra money. Alexandra said this was *exploytatzia*, and I heartily agreed. Boris regarded us both as if we were babes in the woods. "But you understand nothing about capitalism," he said. "If I'm willing to work for that because it's the best I can do, why should I be paid more?"

There has been talk of founding a Russian party to compete in next year's elections and fight for better conditions for the immigrants. On paper, at least, its prospects would not be bad. As things stand now, it takes some 27,000 votes to gain a seat in Israel's 120-member Knesset, and since probably close to 200,000 immigrants of voting age have arrived in the last two years, they have a potential of between three and seven seats—enough to form a small but powerful faction in the postelection coalition scramble. Some Soviet Jews think it's the obvious way to promote their interests within a highly politicized system that gives them at present no voice.

I raised the issue with Natan Sharansky, who has been widely mentioned as the possible head of such a party, and was persuaded in less than ten minutes that it was not as good an idea as it sounds. In the first place, he observed, it would involve pitting Soviet immigrants against other Israelis in a way sure to create anti-immigrant sentiment in a society that has so far been remarkably free of it. Second, such a party could not remain single-issue; if it auctioned itself off to either Labor or Likud in return for greater immigrant benefits, it would have to adopt Labor or Likud positions on other questions, thus splitting its own electorate and running a high risk of internal division. Finally, what benefits could the party ask for even if they were obtainable? No one who gave serious thought to the immigrants' problems, Sharansky said, believed they could be solved by increasing the "absorption basket" or raising rent subsidies. In the long run the only things that would benefit Soviet immigrants were the same political and economic changes that would benefit all Israelis, and in that case, who needed a separate party?

How the newcomers will vote in the coming elections in the absence of a Russian party is far from clear. It may be less heavily for the right than has been assumed. Polls have shown that the longer they are in Israel the less pronounced this tendency becomes, and judgments made by them on the basis of what "left" and "right" mean in Russia seem to wear off quickly under Israeli realities. Certainly their basic profile—Ashkenazi, well educated, professional—is more like that of Labor's voters than of Likud's. And as they become better integrated, they will have their own reasons to gravitate leftward too. One is their remove from religion; especially since many of them are married to non-Jews and have (if the non-Jew is the mother) non-Jewish children according to rabbinical law, they have the markings of a potent anti-clerical force in Israel's secular-religious conflict. Another is the professional distribution of Soviet Jewish women, which greatly resembles that of Soviet men. Although women engineers are virtually unknown among Israelis, they are numerous among the Soviet immigrants, who are already beginning to complain of sexist hiring practices. Israeli feminism, which has never been able to rally a large public to its cause, may eventually find it here.

Age discrimination is a problem too. Once immigrants are past 45, they have a poor chance of being hired by Israeli firms, and word has already gone back in thousands of letters to Russia that the 50s-and-over had better think twice about coming. There is a cruel kind of natural selection here, but youth and positive adjustment correlate closely in all immigrations, in which the middle-aged and the elderly are always the greatest victims. On the whole, though, my impression is that Soviet immigrants of all ages will have less trouble acculturating than their counterparts from elsewhere. New settlers in Israel from the United States or the West tend to find it difficult to get used to Israel's way of doing things, with its bureaucracy, its inefficiency, its casual manners, its indifference to aesthetics, its preference for bargaining rather than playing by clear rules, its reliance on improvisation instead of planning. The Russians, apart perhaps from professing surprise at the sight of so many Jewish homes without pianos and crowded bookshelves, seem to take all this in stride. They have, after all, come to a country founded by Eastern Europeans like themselves and do not have to be told the meaning of a concept like *protektziya*, the Israeli term for the system of personal favors and connections on which so much in the country depends, because it is a good Russian word.

In the end they'll be all right, I think, most of them, but it won't be easy. The other day I ran into Matvei in front of the post office. Matvei has been in the country for eight months. He is a bearded young physicist with a lovely non-Jewish wife named Nina, who is already working as a nurse, and a blond little daughter named Olga, who looks like the snow princess in a fairy tale. He had not found a job since arriving and was quite depressed about it, but recently he had been looking into the possibility of switching to computer science, a field in which there are good prospects in Israel's growing high-tech industry. When I saw him, he was holding a letter he had just received and shaking his head bemusedly. The good news was that he had been invited to the Haifa Technion on Tuesday of that week to be interviewed for its computer program. The bad news was that, things being what they are in Israel, it already happened to be Wednesday. •

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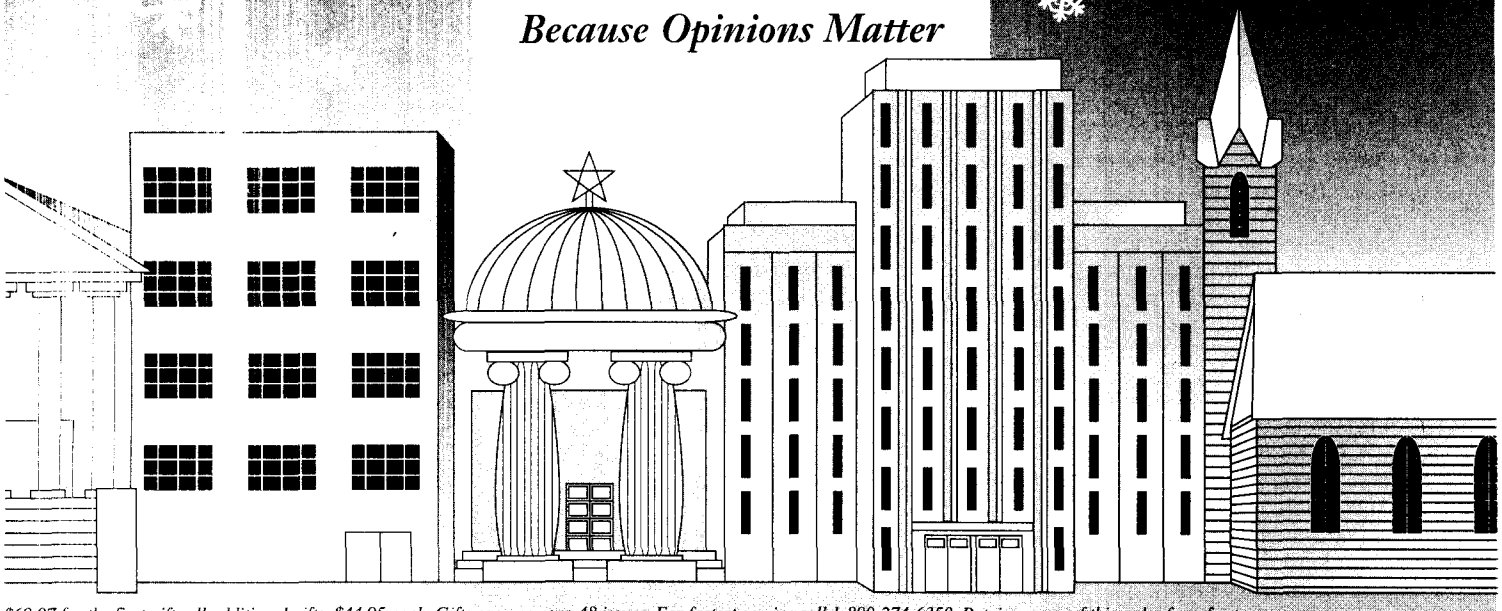

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BOOKS & The Arts

Stanley Kauffmann on Films

Gangster Love

Since 1975 Warren Beatty has made only five films. He gestates. It hasn't always been worth it: *Shampoo* was social comment that fizzled; *Heaven Can Wait* didn't fizzle but was right down a 1940s alley; *Dick Tracy* was a mild try at transformative pop magic; *Ishtar* was *Ishtar*. But he also made *Reds*. Whenever I go to a new Beatty film, it's *Reds* that I have in mind as a standard. Foolishly underrated because of one historical quibble or another, *Reds* did what it chiefly set out to do: it fixed, better than any other film, the romance of idealistic Americans with European radicalism. Further, probably more important, Beatty's work as co-author, as producer, as director, as director of himself, as energizer of the whole enterprise, was fine.

Minimally, he is now at a place where a new film of his stirs expectation. Why, then, after his latest gestation, did he choose this sixth film, a gangster picture? After the flow of gangster films, why another in that vein? **Bugsy** (TriStar) answers that question firmly. Other such films have been about gangsters in Gangland who happen to have women and wives. *Bugsy* is about a man in love who happens to be a gangster in Gangland.

It's based on the life of an actual 1940s gangster, Benny Siegel, who was known as Bugsy, a nickname that infuriated him. He was a New York hood, a stalwart in the mob of Meyer Lansky (who, under a fictitious name, also appeared in *The Godfather*). The high points in Bugsy's professional career are: he was sent to Hollywood on racket business and got involved in the film world; George Raft, who was a friend, even got him a screen test. And he conceived the idea for building up a desert dump called Las Vegas. The chronicle of these matters is studded with snarls, beatings, and some cold-blooded killing by Bugsy.

But what gives this picture its difference is a love story of some heat and irony. Bugsy is married, with two small daughters. In the opening shot he says goodbye to wife and family outside his Scarsdale home, like any ad executive, then drives into Manhattan to a crime conference. Sent to Hollywood, he visits a film studio with Raft and meets an extra named Virginia Hill. She is what used to be called an adventuress. Bugsy, an experienced philanderer, now falls deeply in love; Virginia, after making him sweat out his acceptance, responds in kind. (The crime world is not new to her. She had been the mistress of another hood, and she knows how Bugsy makes his money.)

Then follows their affair, stormy because of their temperaments, laced with her recurrent urging of Bugsy to ask his wife back East for a divorce. In some ways it's just as if this were an ordinary triangle story, except that it's set in the context of racketeering and murder that is Bugsy's habitat.

The publicity about *Bugsy* emphasizes that he was the first gangster to be enmeshed in the film world. This may be true—he keeps a print of his screen test at home, and it figures in two scenes—but ultimately it doesn't count for much in the story. The film's center is the hot grip of love on two people who never expected to be conventionally smitten in their unconventional pursuit of sex and money.

The director was Barry Levinson, whose films from *Diner* to *Avalon* disclosed a growing concern with style, a style of some gentleness. Paradoxically, that gentleness, his feeling for romance, serves him well here. He deals adequately with the violence, though he often includes a muted moment in a brutal scene. (When Bugsy kills a gang employee who was cheating, Levinson varies the murder by looking at it for a moment through the window of the man's office.) It's in the passionate scenes between the lovers, quarreling and loving, that Levinson is at his best. More than once Levinson pans slowly from their first sexy clutch of each other to their bed upstairs. That panning covers the time lapse with imaginative sultriness.

The sound track features 1940s songs of the darkened-ballroom type, like "Long Ago and Far Away," quite unlike the songs that, for instance, Scorsese chose for *GoodFellas*. What was right for Scorsese would have been unhelpful here.

James Toback, who wrote the screenplay, seems to have been well aware of the risks of repetition in all the gangsterizing and, doubtless with Beatty's aid, has worked up other elements, especially the characters of Bugsy and Virginia. Bugsy is a sort of social aspirant; he does speech exercises as he drives, he corrects grammatical errors in others, he uses the word "effete." Virginia, for all her lurid past,

FILMS WORTH SEEING

Antonia and Jane. *Two young women in London, facing love, sex, life with zest and intelligence. Really bright. (Reviewed 12/2/91)* **La Belle Noiseuse.** *A wearied painter and his nude model in Jacques Rivette's adaptation of a Balzac story. Four hours and, as exploration of artistic process, worth it. (11/4/91)* **City of Hope.** *Urban sleaze plumbed by John Sayles with fire and brimstone. The script gets melodramatic; the acting and directing are taut. (10/14/91)* **Meeting Venus.** *Istvan Szabó's rendering of the madness of an opera house preparing a big production. It swirls with color and elegance and truth. Only the central story, an affair between conductor and diva, is dullish. (12/16/91)* **—SK**

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has a strong sense of virtue; and she *also* has an irresistible urge to cheat about money. In character terms, the film builds to the scene where Bugsy needs a large sum of money to keep from being killed and she offers it to him. He declines because he doesn't want to leave her broke, and he goes off to face his fate. (This scene takes place under the wing of a small plane at the Las Vegas airport on a rainy night. Ah, *Casablanca.*)

And Toback has supplied flashy scenes for his star. On the birthday of one of Bugsy's daughters in Scarsdale, Lansky and some of the mob arrive unexpectedly to talk urgent business. Bugsy deals with them in the living room, broaching his Las Vegas dream, then runs back to console his resentful daughter. This shuttling continues until the crime business is settled, by which time the daughter has locked herself in her room; and Bugsy is left alone to contemplate the dying candles on the birthday cake. The scene is a contrivance, of course, but contrivances can work—even retroactively. The Las Vegas venture fails (initially) and seals his fate; and he loses his family through divorce.

Not for the first time, Beatty uses his current light o' love in the leading female role, and once again—after Diane Keaton in *Reds*, for instance—it turns out well. Annette Bening, familiar from *Valmont* and *The Grifters*, has fire and backbone as a woman who has made her way in the world without any illusions about herself but still with considerable self-regard. It's a feisty, witty performance.

Beatty keeps charging. Most of the time he makes it. He still has considerable force, and he hasn't lost much of the confidence in his appeal that makes him appealing—to us, to many of the women he meets along the way in the film, even to many of the hoods.

Ben Kingsley plays Lansky. As with Kate Nelligan in *Frankie and Johnny*, this seems merely a good rendition of a stock character until we remember the actor's past—in Kingsley's case, *Gandhi*, *Betrayal*, *Pascali's Island*, and more.

Levinson begins the last strophe of the film with an immense close-up of Virginia as she receives the news of Bugsy's death. She reacts, almost with resignation, but she says nothing. The camera pans out of the Las Vegas hotel past its garish sign into the night sky. Then there's a shot of present-day neon-nutty Vegas. This implies a corny, vaguely silly finish: "He did not die in vain. His death led to our Las Vegas." But this is followed by two titles that tell us about the money for which Bugsy was killed and what happened finally to Virginia. The cloudy symbols of a high romance, this time in Gangland, persist. •

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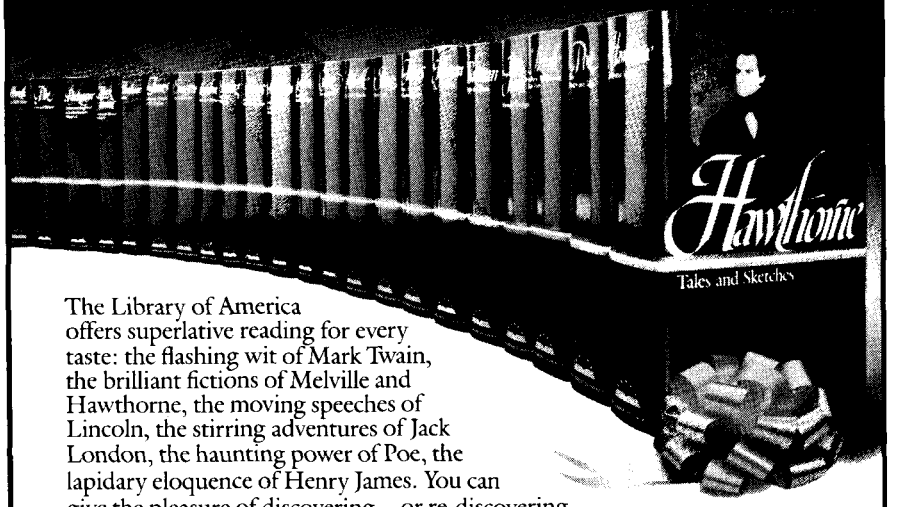

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The fierce and forgotten battle for the Bill of Rights.

The Power of the Powerless

By Sean Wilentz

I.

In the summer of 1789, Congressman James Madison informed a Pennsylvania Federalist about his chief political enterprise, which he called "the nauseous project of amendments" to the newly ratified Constitution. At one extreme of the debate were the recalcitrants, opposed to the proposed amendments (this had been Madison's own position just eighteen months earlier), and at the other extreme those who wanted to use the amendment process to scuttle the Constitution and write a new one. On December 15, 1791, of course, the "nauseous project" would eventuate, to Madison's undying glory, in the ratification of the Bill of Rights. Still, it is worth remembering, on the Bill's bicentennial, that the vast majority of the Framers flatly repudiated the entire idea of a federal bill of rights, on philosophical as well as political grounds. And it is also worth remembering that the father of the Bill of Rights had to be dragged into fatherhood largely by forces outside his control.

His resistance, in turn, raises questions about why Madison changed his mind, about why the Bill of Rights even exists. The standard view is that the Anti-Federalists forced the issue on Madison, who in turn forced it on his colleagues. But who were these Anti-Federalists, and what did they believe? Here things get complicated. Most of the general historical accounts cut directly to such Anti-Federalist gentry notables as George Mason and Richard Henry Lee—accomplished gentlemen and seasoned revolutionaries, conspicuous from the very start in their insistence on a bill of rights. Yet these aristocratic leaders, as Gordon S. Wood has observed, "scarcely represented, either socially or emotionally, the main thrust" of Anti-Federalism.

The heart and soul of the movement lay further down the social scale, among plebeian traders, working artisans, and (especially) backcountry farmers, all of whom the eighteenth century grouped together as "the poor and middling sort." Their politics were deeply egalitarian, beyond anything that Mason or Lee supported. And their motivations help us better to understand the democratic legacy of the American Revolution. For it was the outraged insurgency of these ordinary men—nameless and faceless to most Americans today—that made the Bill of Rights finally unavoidable. It is to them in particular, and not only to the subsequent tangled history of the rights they demanded of their country, that we owe attention at this time of celebration.

The Radicalism of the American Revolution
by Gordon S. Wood
(Knopf, 464 pp., $27.50)

A People's Charter: The Pursuit of Rights in America
by James MacGregor Burns and Stewart Burns
(Knopf, 544 pp., $30)

We The People, Volume 1: Foundations
by Bruce Ackerman
(Harvard University Press, 369 pp., $24.95)

Make No Law: The Sullivan Case and the First Amendment
by Anthony Lewis
(Random House, 384 pp., $25)

In Our Defense: The Bill of Rights in Action
by Ellen Alderman and Caroline Kennedy
(Morrow, 432 pp., $23)

Visions of Liberty: The Bill of Rights for All Americans
by Ira Glasser
(Arcade, 288 pp., $24.95)

It is too bad that the celebration has not been more exuberant. Aside from some important academic conferences and the television spots of Philip Morris Inc. (keenly interested in tobacconists' rights), there has been little of the hoopla that usually accompanies such anniversaries. Even the book trade has failed the occasion, falling far short of the outpourings of 1976 and 1987. Most of the high-profile commercial books that have appeared are more interested in current constitutional and legal debates than in the deeper historical background. In *Visions of Liberty*, for example, Ira Glasser, the executive director of the American Civil Liberties Union, begins with a run-through of the usual Bill of Rights story, but quickly veers off into an exposition of *Griswold* v. *Connecticut*, the supposedly abundant uses of the Ninth Amendment, and the judicial perfidies of Robert Bork. (Combining celebration with position-taking, the book is amply illustrated with the socially conscious photographs of Bob Adelman.) And Ellen Alderman and Caroline Kennedy have even less to say about history, offering instead a smoothly written compendium of recent cases that have tested and stretched the Bill's meaning.

Anthony Lewis's book is of a different order. He takes as his point of departure a single case—the path-breaking libel decision in *New York Times Co.* v. *Sullivan* in 1963, which vastly expanded and deepened First Amendment protections—and delivers an account rich in philosophical suggestion and narrative power. Avoiding the usual formalist clichés about the Olympian judiciary, and leaving room for argument and disagreement with his own views, Lewis proves that he is one of the finest journalists ever to cover the Supreme Court. Unfortunately his book, which nicely conveys where First Amendment law and free-speech rights have gone since 1791, offers only a sketchy account of the amendment's origins.

On this, there is more to be learned from some important professorial works, though even in them the Bill of Rights usually turns up in passing. Bruce Ackerman's provocative book raises some basic questions about Federalist political principles, and hence about the inclusion of the original amendments. To Ackerman, a self-proclaimed neo-Federalist, the Framers introduced the all-important constitutional basis for what he describes as "dualist democracy," a system divided between the "normal" politics of grubby contending interests and a higher form of "constitutional" politics, the latter involving less selfish deliberations over fundamental principles.

By distinguishing between these levels, Ackerman claims, the Federalists kept the republic free of the impossible (and dangerous) romance of participatory democracy while still carving out an arena for what he calls, a little clumsily, "public-regarding political activity involving citizen sacrifice of private interests to pursue the common good in transient and informal political assemblies." In short, the Federalists found a realistic way to institutionalize virtue, an achievement that Ackerman still finds useful in confronting our own political difficulties.

"Virtue" sounds like such a wholesome,

Sean Wilentz is the co-author, with Michael Merrill, of *The Key of Liberty*, a study of William Manning to be published next year by Harvard University Press.

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disciplined, lofty, and necessary thing; and so professors and pundits invoke it in a mantralike tone. At a time when peccancy and private interests have run amok, shouldn't we all demand a more virtuous and more Federalist political debate? Perhaps. But it is far from clear that the Federalist idea of virtue can have much pertinence to the debates of today—or that it has had all that much relevance to American politics for several generations. Indeed, the popular movement for the Bill of Rights two centuries ago was in large measure a challenge precisely to the Federalist conception of virtue.

Federalist virtue was fundamentally and irreversibly undemocratic—a point that Ackerman acknowledges, but works pretty hard to avoid. It rested on the firm conviction that at any given time only a select group of men could be counted on to lay aside their private interests in favor of the common good. To someone like Alexander Hamilton (speaking at the original Philadelphia convention in 1787), such men came from the ranks of "the few," the "rich and well-born," who could successfully check the "turbulent and changing" many. Other Framers, Madison among them, were less drawn to such patently aristocratic formulations and spoke instead about how educated, rational gentlemen of standing and reputation—gentlemen much like themselves—possessed the requisite spirit of citizenly sacrifice.

Finding some means to encourage the leadership of such gentlemen, and to check the passions of unenlightened ordinary men, became one of the Federalists' chief aims in 1787-88. They thus tried as far as possible to install institutional filters within the new federal plan, in order to help bring selfless patriots to office and allow them to act as neutral, disinterested arbiters in the unceasing battles among the vulgar and unvirtuous masses. (Hence many of the more curious features of our politics, the Electoral College most curious of all.) Formally, the new system sustained popular sovereignty: executive and legislative leaders had to get elected. And, contrary to what some historians have charged, the Federalist vision was *not* a cynical cover for class rule: it was a deeply held social and moral outlook, colored by classical republican assumptions about commonwealth and citizenship, and driven by genuinely idealistic fears of the dangers that self-interest posed to republican government. Still, it was a vision that wagered the republic's success less on the occasional public-spiritedness of the many (about which the Framers were dubious) than on the constant virtue of the few.

It was precisely this vision of virtuous politics that the Anti-Federalists attacked so vehemently in the struggle over the Constitution and the Bill of Rights. To them, all the Federalists' high-minded talk about enlightened patriotism and selfless disinterest was only the expression of particular social and economic interests by men, however sincere, who could never transcend them. No man, the Anti-Federalists shot back, was above self-interest. Certainly no single man or single group of men could be trusted to rule virtuously. "I never wish to be in the power of any Sett of Men let them be never so good," wrote one semi-lettered Maine democrat, "but hope to be left in the hands of my Countery."

So long as all citizens—the few as well as the many, the educated as well as the unlettered, the reputable as well as the disreputable—had interests, any form of politics based on virtue was at best a fantasy and at worst a hoax. Truly republican politics, the Anti-Federalists insisted, began with a frank recognition of the universality of self-interest. Instead of false promises of self-transcendence by an elite, all men and all classes of men needed to own up to what their interests were, and then fight for them within a fair and democratic system of laws. And politics should be conducted accordingly, based not on moral difference but on political equality. Democratic politics should be founded on the notion (as the Pennsylvania country democrat William Findley put it) that "no man has a greater claim of special privilege for his £100,000 than I have for my £5."

II.

By hemming in a federal government that could never fully be trusted, the Bill of Rights amounted to a key victory for this more realistic conception of interests and this more egalitarian

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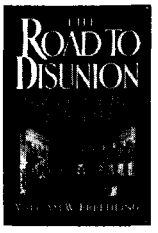

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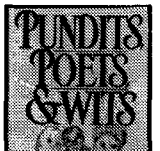

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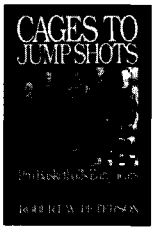

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conception of politics—one that, in retrospect, presaged the demolition of the Federalists' political vision over the opening decades of the nineteenth century. Two imposing new books help us understand what happened.

James MacGregor Burns and Stewart Burns have written an ambitious synthesis of virtually everything connected to the pursuit of rights in America, from the colonial era to the present. Taking a left-populist approach not normally associated with the senior Burns, the book shows how rights talk (much of it, in truth, derived not from Madison's amendments, but from Jefferson's Declaration of Independence) has galvanized virtually every democratic movement in the nation's history. The Burnses demonstrate that the expansion of rights has almost always depended on the mobilization of these democratic movements. But this book, too, comes with its share of disappointments. Although the Burnses provide a strong summary of the Federalist resistance to the Bill of Rights, and of what they call Madison's "somersault," they refrain from saying much about the popular uprising that was so critical to the story.

It is Gordon S. Wood's study of the Revolution—a book that does not discuss the Bill of Rights at all—that goes the furthest toward making that movement comprehensible. Since his pathbreaking *The Creation of the American Republic*, which was published in 1969, Wood has been instructing and intriguing scholars with his latest research, making better sense than any historian of the themes of virtue and interest at the nation's founding. He has now delivered another major statement, and in handsome style. *The Radicalism of the American Revolution* is a powerful repudiation of the once dominant view of the Revolution as a consensual, conservative, legalistic event, lacking in passion or radical philosophy. It is also a rejoinder to those who are inclined to see the Revolution as a purely ideological episode, without social causes or ramifications. Above all, the book never loses touch with the most profound questions about the country's early political development—even as its own interpretations of American democracy turn increasingly flat and unconvincing.

By Wood's account, the Revolution unfolded in two distinct but overlapping phases. The first involved the Revolution with which we are most familiar, the revolt against Great Britain and the creation of the American republic. It arose, Wood argues, from deep social and cultural changes—a rapid growth in the size and the movement of colonial populations, a widening of commercial opportunities, a loosening of the old bonds of patriarchy and deference that had been the glue of the economically backward monarchical regime. Americans hardly felt impoverished or oppressed in 1776. The social transformations of the mid-eighteenth century had bred an exhilarating, utopian sense of new possibilities that burst the old fetters of patronage, fear, and dependency sustained by the British connection. In place of the blatant corruption of courtier society, they launched a radical experiment that "aimed at nothing less than a reconstitution of American society." They set out to build a new republican order based on a virtuous pursuit of the commonwealth, by equal independent citizens and their disinterested leaders.

The second phase, in Wood's account, had its roots in the republican Revolution but flourished in its aftermath. This, strictly speaking, was the rise of American democracy. Although they were united in a grand patriotic coalition, Americans did not agree about what, exactly, their new republic ought to look like. Some leaders, especially among the static, rentier gentry, feared that the mass of the citizenry had been seduced by fresh material opportunities and therefore lacked the full measure of selfless virtue required by republicanism.

But ordinary Americans, inspired by the Revolution's promise of natural rights and equality, saw things differently. To these common, utterly unaristocratic men—small-propertied farmers, artisans, manufacturers, and those whom Wood calls "hustling entrepreneurs"—the Revolution had come to mean that distinctions of wealth, birth, intellect, and character should weigh as nothing in the nation's politics. They bridled at the slightest implication that they—the actual producers of property, the people whose sacrifices had won the Revolution and whose sweat was building the country—were a vulgar herd mindlessly in pursuit of baser appetites, sorely in need of enlightened leadership.

Quickly, these common and self-made Americans began to regard the self-styled patriot gentry as little more than aristocrats in disguise, who were trying to enlarge and then to commandeer the federal government in order to erect privileged barriers to wealth and power. And the stubborn populist resistance eventually triumphed, replacing the overly idealistic and visionary ideals of the republican Revolution with a truly democratic order, securing to plain people "the freedom to make money and pursue happiness." Thus the utopian experiment of 1776 ended up as Tocqueville's America of the 1830s: "the most liberal, the most democratic, the most commercially minded, and the most modern" society on earth, bound together not by the pursuit of virtue but by the pursuit of cash.

Wood's demonstration of the genuinely radical character of the republican Revolution proceeds on so many different levels—political, cultural, social—that it disarms criticism. His evocation of the heady sense that a new world was in birth restores the Revolution to its rightful place at the center of American history—and of the political history of the world. Less convincing, however, are his contentions about the peculiarly premodern, eighteenth-century nature of the Revolution's republican phase. Although it was radical, he writes, the social assault of 1776 "was not the sort we are used to today in describing revolutions."

Modern revolutions, according to Wood's model, look like what Marx said they looked like: they pit poor against rich and workers against employers, and they are inspired by the desire "to overturn one class and replace it by another." But the American Revolution involved no such thing. It was, Wood writes, an effort to destroy a traditional, monarchical set of social ties and to replace them with "new republican adhesives." In one respect, Wood's argument is self-evident: for no historian (if memory serves) has argued that the American Revolution involved the elevation of a particular class. Still, this is not to say that at least some of the patriots did not see the Revolution in terms of haves and have-nots.

More important, even if the patriot movement was a coalition of classes, it certainly did seek the overthrow of a coherent class, and all those who supported it. That class was the Loyalist elite, those "well-to-do gentry," as Wood describes them, "operating at the pinnacles of power and patronage," whose allegiance to the crown outweighed their loyalty to the American nation, and whose very existence embodied everything the revolutionaries aimed to eradicate. And eradicate them the revolutionaries did, removing the mandarins sometimes physically from the seats of power, and forcing them into exile (at a rate six times higher than the comparable emigration during the French Revolution), and confiscating their lands.

To some this might seem a terribly old-fashioned sort of revolution, not really modern at all. In fact, contrary to Marx and a mountain of sociology textbooks, this revolution contained what has been, and still remains, the most powerful of modern revolutionary

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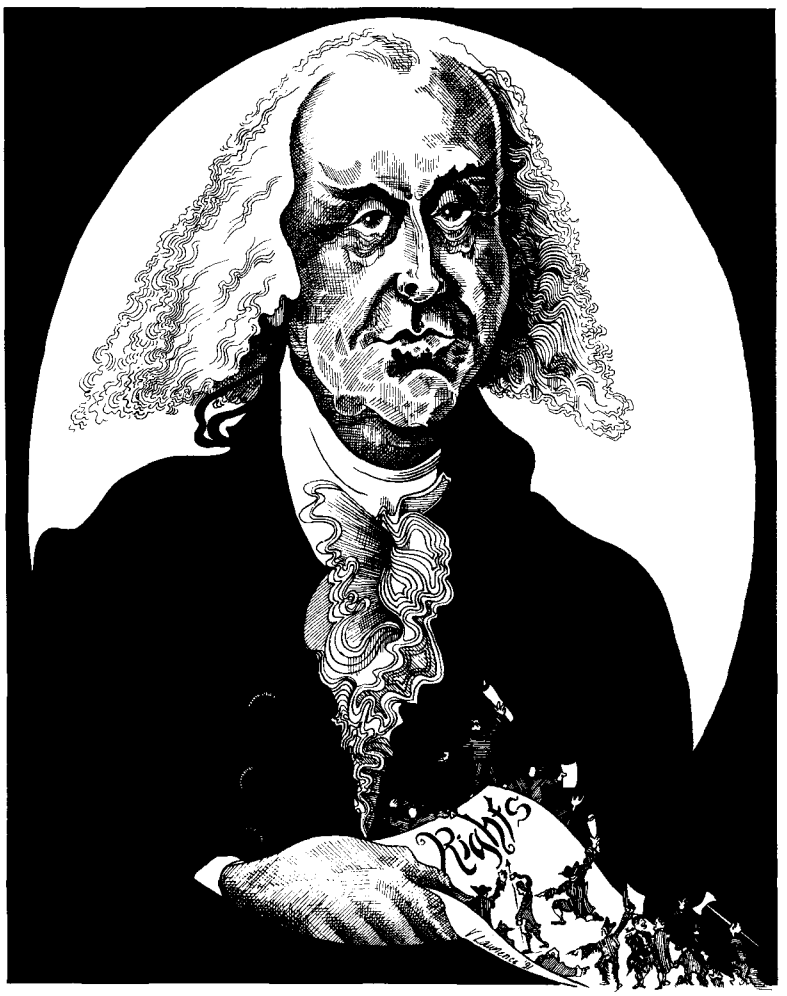
impulses: to drive off the corrupt creatures of privilege, money, and state authority in the name of the nation or the people. This impulse helped inspire the English radical William Cobbett and the later Chartists in their diatribes against "the Thing." It wafted through France amid its great nineteenth-century revolutions, and was immortalized in Stendhal and Flaubert. It has animated much modern agrarian and labor radicalism on both sides of the Atlantic (including the more democratic variants of socialism). And in the past decade it has shown itself in Manila and (irony of ironies) in Prague and Warsaw and Berlin. Of course circumstances have differed markedly over the centuries; latter-day revolutionaries turn directly to democracy, rather than to republican virtue. Still, there are good reasons to see the American Revolution not as some premodern relic, but as the first and greatest of all modern revolutions.

Given Wood's inclination to interpret things unconventionally, it is strange to see him barely discuss the Revolution's most glaring premodern feature, which was its connection to slavery. At the rare moments when slavery comes up in his pages, it mostly looks like a distraction. Wood explains that to dwell on the Revolution's "failure to abolish slavery" would be "to miss the great significance of what it did accomplish." It would also obscure how the Revolution's ideas helped prepare the way for the later anti-slavery movement, "and in fact all our egalitarian thinking." But this has the consequence of preventing him from tackling some of the really interesting issues.

It would be absurd to judge the Revolution solely on the question of slavery. (Slavery was evil, the Revolution preserved slavery, therefore the Revolution was evil....) But once he has refuted this tendentious line of reasoning, Wood excuses himself from grappling with slavery at all, apart from a few paragraphs in passing. As a result, his book's view of the Revolution ends up skewed. The Revolution did not simply fail to abolish slavery; thanks to the Constitution, slavery in some ways emerged more firmly entrenched than ever before (though not quite as entrenched as some planters desired). And although later generations successfully turned the Revolution's egalitarian ideals toward anti-slavery ends, this tells us far more about those later generations than it does about the Revolution itself. In some parts of the North, certainly, the Revolution's outcome hastened slavery's demise. The connection was complicated.

As for Wood's treatment of democratization after 1787, it brings to mind John Stuart Mill's complaint about Tocqueville's great work on America: although full of wonderful insights, Mill said, it committed a fatal mistake when it "bound up in one abstract idea the whole tendencies of modern commercial society and [gave] them one name—Democracy." Although Americans may have been the most commercially minded people on earth by the 1820s, they were not universally so. As late as the 1840s, significant parts of the up-country and piney-woods South, pockets of the newly opened West, and other areas remained almost wholly outside the orbit of commercial relations—a state of affairs that, we have learned, most residents found satisfactory. Moreover, many of these same uncommercial areas were strongholds for democratic politics, especially in the Jacksonian period; and this fact casts doubt on any necessary, direct link between democracy and the right of plain folks to make money.

More important, Wood's treatment of democracy in the more commercial regions is simplistic. First (as Wood shows), while ordinary democrats assailed the traditional gentry, they and their political leaders also railed at other sorts of monied men: stockjobbers, bankers, merchants, "sharpers" of every description. Not that the democrats saw anything wrong with commerce and moneymaking. As one rural New England democrat observed in the late 1790s, merchants provided great services "by makeing vent for our produce & furnishing us with nesecaryes & conveniences from other cuntryes." Bankers, when they were honorable, contributed greatly to "the free circulation of money" necessary for profitable trade. There were plenty of merchants, bankers, and others who, out of principled self-interest, cast their lot with the democrats. And there were important democratic leaders, notably Albert Gallatin, who sought to direct finance and money toward promoting genuinely democratic commerce.



DRAWING BY VINT LAWRENCE FOR THE NEW REPUBLIC

The trouble was that too often all sorts of monied men selfishly confused their own well-being with that of the nation as a whole, mistaking the maximization of their own profits for the fulfillment of some innate and natural form of justice. They proceeded (said the democrats) to bleed ordinary enterprisers dry, by demanding and then exploiting money and credit policies that enriched themselves at the direct expense of the laboring majority. Self-interest may have been universal, but in this case it pitted one set of "hustling entrepreneurs"—those with access to large pools of money—against less advantaged, small-propertied producers trying to make a buck.

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Second, and even more conspicuously, not all of the gentry lined up against the democrats. Indeed, the national leadership of the democratic coalition came largely from Southern slaveholding planters, headed first by Jefferson and later by Jackson. Wood conveniently treats this as "one of the most curious anomalies in American history." But it is really not so anomalous at all. Like the enterprising small producers and artisan-manufacturers of the North, Southern planters were interested in ensuring that professionals, bankers, speculators, and monied men generally were there to serve productive enterprise, and not the other way around. That the planters' enterprise came mainly out of the sweat and blood of black slaves was of less immediate importance to the Northern democrats than the common ground they might establish against the presumptions of the monied interests. Eventually the democratic coalition fell apart, when the expansion of slavery seemed to threaten the well-being of the plain farmers and mechanics of the North; but it was this national coalition, for the first fifty years of the republic's history, that oversaw the battle for democratization.

Democracy, then, was about far more than the release of aggressive mobile entrepreneurial energies against a proprietary elite (although that was surely part of it). It was also about whether the balance of political power should rest with the minority who lived off their money or with the rest of the citizenry. And that battle hardly ended in the 1820s. It turned up in the Jacksonians' bank war, and in the struggle between those whom Martin Van Buren called "sweats" and "wits." It appeared in the great upheavals of the 1880s and 1890s, led by the broadly gauged labor movement and the Populists. Nor, despite the enormous changes of the last two centuries, has the battle ever really ended. What is so difficult to recall today, and what *The Radicalism of the American Revolution* helps us to detail, is that that battle had its dim, distant origins in the fight over the Bill of Rights.

III.

Technically, the current bicentennial may mislead some Americans, for the first formal and permanent bill of rights produced by the American Revolution dates not from 1791, but from 1776. So does the democratizing history that eventually led to the federal Bill of Rights.

Shortly before the signing of the Declaration of Independence, the newly formed state of Virginia discarded its colonial charter and approved a republican constitution, including a ringing Declaration of Rights, protecting some specific individual rights and proclaiming that "all men" are equally free. Over the next eight years, seven of the thirteen American states, along with the independent republic of Vermont, affixed some sort of bill of rights to their own new state constitutions; and most of the others that drafted new constitutions included some provisions about rights in the main bodies of their charters.

Some of this insistence on rights and standards came from prominent, well-established Whig gentlemen, who were simply applying the lesson of their experience with Parliament—that, as Jefferson wrote, "bodies of men as well as individuals are susceptible to the spirit of tyranny." Elsewhere, however, more egalitarian and potentially disruptive currents played a larger role in pushing for state bills of rights; and these different parts of the country had different notions of what natural rights entailed.

Plebeian democratic sentiment ran especially strong in backcountry farming areas. Long alienated from both local grandees and the seaboard elite, these districts had clashed with colonial assemblies and their agents over a host of issues, ranging from religious liberties to taxes. In the course of these occasionally violent battles, country democrats pushed their egalitarianism well beyond the limits of gentry Whig republicanism—to the extent of a suspicion that no governmental body, however chosen, could ever be trusted.

Firing the backcountry's wariness was a deeper apprehension, moral and political, of the power wielded by rentiers, fee officers, merchants, and other monied men, an apprehension that was reinforced by cultural and religious differences, especially between backcountry evangelicals and high-church elites. The problem was that "the few" gained their wealth not by their honorable labors, but as parasites off the labors of "the many." They did so primarily (though not exclusively) through the agency of the government—by controlling lucrative offices, imposing arbitrary and unfair taxes, manipulating money policy, collecting fees, designing murky property laws, threatening land tenure, and innumerable other devices. Having perverted public power to serve their own selfish ends, "the few" would forever conspire to exploit the majority, using all the instruments of bribery, flattery, and legal obscurantism at their command.

As soon as American resistance to Britain turned into revolution, rural democrats mobilized in committees and conventions, and proclaimed their political aspirations in no uncertain terms. From the Chesapeake to northern New England, political leaders felt pressures from below. The most dramatic events unfolded in Massachusetts. At the outbreak of hostilities with Britain, the rebellious provisional government of Massachusetts announced that a modified form of the colonial charter would serve, at least temporarily, as the new commonwealth's constitution. The plan raised howls of protest from the western counties, where locals shut down the courts rather than submit to a government not of their own making. Part of the terms of any new social compact, the westerners declared, would have to be some explicit statements about rights. "We hope in the Establishment of . . . a new Constitution," the town of Pittsfield petitioned, "regard will be had for such a broad basis of Civil & religious Liberty as no Length of Time will Corrupt & which will endure as long as the Sun & Moon shall endure."

In 1778 the Massachusetts legislature finally submitted a new constitution for the approval of the citizenry, but it neglected to include a bill of rights. The response was decisive: overall, the towns rejected the draft proposal by a 5-to-1 margin. Immediately thereafter, amid continuing rioting and turmoil, Berkshire and Hampshire County towns stepped up their demands. Even staunch eastern conservatives began to realize that without a bill of rights, all constitutional proposals were doomed. Two years later the Massachusetts legislature finally offered the more palatable draft that ultimately stood, complete with an extensive Declaration of Rights.

To someone like the small farmer William Manning, it was a substantial achievement. Writing years later, Manning observed that all history had been a struggle between "the Few" and "the Many" in which the former always destroyed free government. Yet the Massachusetts Declaration of Rights, he believed, had provided a new model, by which no man or class "however high by birth riches or honour" would enjoy more rights "than the poorest man in the government."

The agitation was not limited to the countryside. In the major seaboard cities, artisans and petty tradesmen were at the forefront of the early popular movement for independence, and they issued repeated calls for democratized state government. They achieved their greatest success in Pennsylvania, where a radical movement based in Philadelphia's trades, the city's militia, and western rural towns took control of state politics and enacted the most democratic of

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all the state constitutions. They included a broad Declaration of Rights dedicated to the proposition that government "ought to be instituted for the common benefit ... and not for the particular emolument of any single man, family, or set of men."

Thus ran a key part of what the Framers would call "the genius of the people" at the nation's founding—the cornerstone of constitutionalism from below. Unfortunately, in 1787 the Philadelphia convention, attentive in other ways to the people's genius, thought a bill of rights irrelevant to its purposes. The oversight, and the ensuing battle it caused, nearly killed the American Constitution in its cradle.

The Framers' handling of the issue of rights amounted to a huge misjudgment, which was made worse by their attempts to explain and to justify it as a matter of principle. There is no evidence to sustain the harsher verdict that the convention actively conspired to abridge the people's liberties (a theory that some Anti-Federalists quite sincerely believed). Not a single delegate, a worried George Washington hastily assured his friend Lafayette, "had the least objection" to the professed aims of a bill of rights; and the most important delegate of all, James Madison, had proved himself a champion of civil and religious liberties in Virginia. But the idea of including a federal bill of rights simply did not arise, so long as the convention's attentions were fixed on how to strengthen the powers of their proposed national government and check the supposed tyranny of the majority in the states.

Only late in the deliberations did George Mason—the old gentry republican, now increasingly unfriendly to the convention's consolidating handiwork—propose a bill of rights in order to give "great quiet to the people." Exhausted by their summer's work, deeply suspicious of Mason's motives, and so close to being done, the delegates brusquely rejected his suggestion. And from that moment on, the leading friends of the Constitution (and even some who harbored criticisms) had no doubts whatever that the entire discussion of the bill of rights was only a smoke screen, manufactured by malcontents whose true object was to reject the Constitution completely.

Behind the polemics lurked a defense of the Framers' basic conception of the Constitution as an enunciation of discrete powers granted to a federal government by a sovereign people. Yet as the counterattacks moved into apologetics, they ran into a web of apparent contradictions. At the Philadelphia convention, in reply to Mason's proposal, Connecticut's Roger Sherman held that a bill of rights was unnecessary because the new national government claimed no powers that required such safeguards. As Hamilton, James Wilson, and others later explained, a federal bill of rights would actually be dangerous. It would imply that the federal government possessed powers not granted it by the convention: a constitutional guarantee to a free press, for example, would suggest wrongly that the federal government had any power whatsoever over the press. Or, as Hamilton put it in the eighty-fourth paper of *The Federalist*, "Why declare things should not be done which there is no power to do?"

Why, indeed? But then why, the skeptics retorted, had the convention seen fit explicitly to protect certain rights in the Constitution to the seeming exclusion of others? Article 1, section 9 was crammed with specifics about jury trials, religious tests, bills of attainder, and ex post facto laws, all of which looked very much like matters of rights. The next section prohibited state laws that impaired contracts—easy enough to construe as the vindication of an important natural right. If the Constitution left all but its enumerated powers to the states, why include these checks? Had the people no rights worthy of attention other than those stipulated in the Constitution? Might one not infer just as easily that all rights *not* listed in the Constitution were actually relinquished by the people?

There were answers to these questions, but they grew increasingly inconsistent—and ominous. Sometimes the friends of the Constitution argued that the state bills of rights were the sole proper guarantors of civil liberties, and at other times they contended that states that lacked bills of rights were no less free than those that had them. As a corollary to that argument came the contention (advanced by Hamilton and others) that no bill of rights could ever really guarantee anything, since ultimately public opinion, as it is shaped by public necessity, would overwhelm mere words on paper (as in fact it had during various wartime emergencies in the 1770s). And from this came the singular conclusion that the very notion of a bill of rights was inimical to America's political institutions. In Britain, surely, it was appropriate to gain royal assent to certain liberties; hence the Magna Carta, the Petition of Right of 1628, and the Bill of Rights of 1689. But in America, as Hamilton wrote, constitutions were "founded upon the power of the people," a power that needed no check upon itself.

Thus an astonished citizenry learned that the triumph of American popular sovereignty rendered all bills of rights unnecessary, un-American. The emerging Anti-Federalists could not have hoped for a better response. There were, though, differences among Anti-Federalists along the lines that Wood draws—differences that echoed those between gentry republicans and plebeian democrats in the 1770s. At the top were some of the leading Whig ideologues of the Revolution, most eloquently Mason and Patrick Henry. Ever concerned about the preservation of local power (including their own power over their localities), they feared that the Constitution would extinguish states' rights, and wind up (like Great Britain) as a corrupt monarchy.

Unlike the plebeian democrats, the gentry republicans, though deeply alienated, did not dwell on the machinations of "the few" (in whose ranks they surely counted). Nor, as a group, was the Anti-Federalist gentry all that friendly to democracy, as many of them had made abundantly clear in their pronouncements up to 1787. Among the rank and file, however, the struggle over the Constitution was very much about class and democratic power—and the lack of a bill of rights was proof positive that the Constitution truly was, as one country democrat put it, "intended to destroy our free governments." They had other concerns, too—about the ratio of federal representation, and the length of senatorial and presidential terms, and federal power over taxes and the military—but nothing more deeply offended the basic principles of constitutionalism among country democrats than the lack of a bill of rights. Not surprising, it became the chief line of Anti-Federalist attack in the ratification struggles of 1787-88.

Moving quickly after the Philadelphia Convention, the friends of the Constitution faced their first real fight in Pennsylvania, where, Gouverneur Morris reported, there was reason to fear "the cold and sour temper of the backcountry." As in other states with sizable cities, Pennsylvania's old democratic constituency of the Revolution was divided in 1787-88. Most of Philadelphia's artisans and tradesmen, so central to the radical movements of the 1770s, enthusiastically supported the Constitution, and its promise to solve their desperate economic problems. The countryside was different. There the fears of taxation and tyranny replaced the urban enthusiasm for tariffs. And there memories of 1776 were rekindled, as men like Findley and Robert Whitehill of Cumberland County—a former member of the radical Committee of Pri-

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vates and a forceful country democrat—tried to obstruct the state convention's pro-Constitution majority.

The vast majority of the convention's western delegates agreed, and joined Whitehill in signing an address including a stinging denunciation of "the omission of a BILL OF RIGHTS," without which "the common people will not be able to contend or struggle" against "the power of aristocratical influence." Outside the convention, meanwhile, more obscure figures hammered at the themes of democracy, class, and rights. According to one assault by the pseudonymous satirist "Montezuma," the Constitution was the brainchild of "the Aristicratic party of the United States," designed to expel all "*democratical vapours*" and "restrain the influence and power of the LOWER CLASS"; quite purposely, the Constitution "said nothing about a bill of rights," which the aristocrats viewed "as an eternal Clog on [their] designs." Ultimately, the Pennsylvania convention, heavily weighted in numbers toward the eastern districts, ratified the Constitution, bringing some violent complaints farther west. And once the debate passed on to other states, more decorous but no less determined protests followed.

Afraid that they were watching their work unravel, the Federalists still could not believe that these outbursts represented anything more than the misguided fears of an impressionable populace whipped up by demagogues. Calls for accommodation got nowhere—until the Federalists had to confront the conventions in the three most important remaining states, Massachusetts, New York, and Virginia. Each contained either an Anti-Federalist majority or was closely divided. Failure to ratify in any of them would have proved crippling, if not fatal, to the Constitution's cause.

It was in Massachusetts that the Constitution's handlers finally made the concession that led to the great democratic compromise of 1791—a promise that, if the Constitution were ratified, amendments from the convention would be entertained. The pledge left most of the Anti-Federalist delegates cold, but it swung enough votes to secure a slender pro-ratification majority. In Virginia it took another promise (with none other than Madison, thus far an outspoken foe of the federal bill of rights, personally agreeing to recommend the amendments) to carry the convention in a narrow vote. Similar results obtained in New York. It was less than die-hard Anti-Federalists had hoped for; but considering the weight of the influence, the reputation, and theorganization arrayed against it, constitutionalism from below had won an important concession.

The dimensions of that victory can be measured by the trajectory of Madison. At the Philadelphia convention, he stood firmly with those opposed to considering a bill of rights. He reaffirmed his opposition repeatedly over the following months, insisting that only a misguided factionalism could explain the sudden ferment. In a famous exchange of letters with Jefferson (then in Paris), he doubted the effectiveness of any mere "parchment barriers," especially "on those occasions where [their] control is most needed." At the Virginia ratifying convention, he grudgingly allowed that he would support amendments "not because they are necessary, but because they can produce no possible danger, and may gratify some gentlemen's wishes."

Yet by degrees Madison found himself dragged into talking very differently—all the more quickly once the stigma of his opposition to the Bill of Rights helped to cost him a seat in the new Senate, and nearly kept him out of the House of Representatives as well. Madison began finding benefits in the proposed amendments, suggesting that he had really favored a bill of rights all along, provided that it did not give the general government unintended implied powers. It all led to his celebrated congressional proclamation of June 8, 1789, that since all power was subject to abuse, it was important for the Constitution to guarantee "the great rights of mankind."

For this, and for his subsequent persistence in getting the amendments framed, passed by Congress, and then ratified, Madison is known to posterity as "the father of the Bill of Rights." More properly, the Bill of Rights had many fathers, some well-known such as Mason and Henry, others with unfamiliar names such as Whitehill and "Montezuma," and still others with names even more obscure, from the ranks of the plebeian democracy.

In his heart, Madison still feared the tyranny of state majorities more than potential abuses by the federal government, yet he had little option but to fulfill his pledges. As chairman of the appropriate congressional committee, he had spread before him dozens of suggested amendments from the state conventions. From these, Madison and Congress settled on twelve, eliminating most of the structural amendments and focusing on those restricted to matters of individual rights. (The last two of these,

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affecting congressional compensation and representation, died in the state ratification process.) The Federalists, many of whom still regarded the Bill of Rights as an absurdity, could at least take cynical satisfaction that the amendments had helped to divert and to quiet the opposition. Although some Anti-Federalist leaders such as Mason expressed their approval of the new amendments, many more sunk into sullen gloom. Madison's maneuvering had defeated those calls for amendments that would have led to a second national convention to rewrite the Constitution entirely, and he had done so without seriously altering the Constitution he had helped to erect.

It is tempting to generalize from these conclusions, and to regard the Bill of Rights as a co-optive, self-defeating triumph, not just for the Anti-Federalist leaders but for the broader plebeian democracy. Yet less than a decade later it became clear that it was the Federalists, and not the plebeian democrats, who had suffered a Pyrrhic victory at the nation's founding.

Having made their compromises with constitutionalism from below, the Federalists were stuck with them, which they later had reason to regret. Certainly the emerging Democratic-Republican opposition of the 1790s benefited enormously from its ability to claim that the ruling Federalists were at war not simply with the country's best interests, but with the Constitution itself. Those claims became increasingly convincing and impassioned during the superheated years 1798 and 1799, when the opposition—now including Madison—charged that repressive Federalist measures (above all the Sedition Act) violated the Bill of Rights. Democratic-Republicans saw the agitation that led to Jefferson's election to the presidency in 1801 as a new revolution, one that vindicated the spirit of 1776. More directly, however, that agitation drew strength from the great democratic compromise of 1791.

It was decades before the Bill of Rights again played so explicit a role in shaping our national life. Only in this century, in fact, after constitutional shifts had extended the amendments' protections to cover state law, did the Bill of Rights become the point of contention that it is today. But contention was the stuff of which this democracy was made. The bitterness of the present debates must not diminish the celebration of what happened 200 years ago. Two cheers, then, for Madison and Mason—and two cheers, too, for Whitehill and "Montezuma." •

Minds and Machines

BY ISRAEL ROSENFIELD

Consciousness Explained by Daniel C. Dennett

(Little, Brown, 511 pp., $27.95)

The distinction between memories as information stored somewhere in our brains and memories as conscious recollections has rarely troubled psychologists, philosophers, and neuroscientists. One exception was Freud, who suggested that consciousness could not be understood independently of the unconscious, and that conscious processes have a different structure from unconscious processes, though his view was tempered by his assumption that memories stored in the brain could become conscious in an identical form. But Freud, again, was an exception. Although twentieth-century psychology has failed to make clear the distinction between conscious and unconscious knowledge, its concentration on unconscious "thoughts" is an indirect acknowledgment that what is interesting about consciousness is precisely how it differs from the unconscious.

Typically, the breakdown of mental function following brain damage is described as if no such distinction existed. Patients appear to lose specific memories and specific brain functions, just as a particular memory or program can be wiped out of a computer. But such an analysis, I believe, is superficial. A deeper view of the clinical evidence suggests that profound alterations in the structure of a patient's knowledge follow brain damage. Patients who lose their sight, for example, no longer know what "seeing" means, though they continue to use the word and to respond to questions as if they understand what is being asked of them. What they understand by "seeing" is beyond our comprehension. Similarly, patients may lose the notions of "right" and "left," and still respond as if they understood what these words mean.

These neurological problems, in other words, are the consequence of changes in the structure of knowledge—of altered conscious awareness, not altered information stored in the brain. An interesting theory of consciousness would explain how and why such changes occur, and therefore how conscious knowledge differs from the information we can record and store in books, computers, and our brains. That is not, however, the aim of the American philosopher Daniel Dennett's new book. He seeks to convince us that the brain is for all practical purposes a computer. Consciousness is not so much explained as "explained away."

Dennett argues that the brain consists of many "stupid" homunculi that are innately dedicated to solving specific tasks, such as recognizing shapes or sounds. Various channels of communication are established among these homunculi, and consequently a variety of possible interpretations of stimuli are created. What eventually takes control of these various coalitions of homunculi are complex ideas (such as wheels, calendars, the *Odyssey*) that are drawn from cultural transmission. (Deriving his terminology from Richard Dawkins's *The Selfish Gene*, Dennett calls these complex ideas "memes.") And this cultural inheritance creates a "virtual machine," a set of temporary structures, "made of rules rather than wires," that harnesses the various homunculi into a conscious brain.

"Human consciousness," Dennett writes,

> is *itself* a huge complex of memes (or more exactly, meme-effects in brains) that can best be understood as the operation of a "von Neumannesque" virtual machine *implemented* in the *parallel architecture* of a brain that was not designed for any such activities. The powers of the *virtual machine* greatly enhance the underlying powers of the organic *hardware* on which it runs.

Dennett's von Neumannesque virtual machine is a fancy way of describing cultural influences on brain function: "thousands of memes," he writes, "most borne by language but also by wordless 'images' and other data structures, take up residence in an individual brain, shaping its tendencies and thereby turning it into a mind." Calling culture a virtual machine is hardly enlightening; but buried in this argument is an implicit claim that memory (or the memes) and consciousness are inseparable elements.

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Even perception is vaguely linked to this structure.

The argument that perception, memory, and consciousness are all parts of the same process would have been interesting and radical. Dennett, however, remains within the confines of contemporary computer design, making it clear that he believes that perception and memory are separate functions that exist independently of consciousness. Yet memory, perception, and consciousness *are* linked; and human memory bears no resemblance to that of a computer. When we retrieve information from a computer memory, we can keep it on the computer screen for as long as we like. But try to recall a piece of information and keep it consciously in mind for half an hour. A recalled image will fade in and out of consciousness, a word or sentence will require a conscious effort of repetition.

There is something dynamic about remembering that has nothing to do with the steady image produced from a computer's memory. Just how conscious perceptions and recollections differ from stored information, therefore, is hardly a trivial problem, and it is certainly not irrelevant to a discussion of consciousness. For Dennett, however, recalling something is not very different from retrieving information from a computer memory. "Couldn't consciousness be," he asks rhetorically, "a matter not of arrival at a point but rather a matter of representation *exceeding some threshold of activation* over the whole cortex?" (italics mine). And then he adds, without further explanation, that a thing may become conscious "by changing state," or by "acquiring some property or by having the intensity of one of its properties boosted above threshold."

But if it is a "change of state," what is the nature of this change? What "new property" might be added? These, after all, are the central questions with which a book about consciousness should be concerned. But Dennett ignores the issue, and consequently he proposes the following rather odd thought-experiment. Imagine, he suggests, that we attended an all-male party one Sunday night. Following the party he, Dennett, surgically "inserted" a memory of a woman with a hat at the same party. This bit of surgery, Dennett continues, will make us always recall the party with the woman in the hat, even though this "memory" was added after the fact.

But why, if anything like Dennett's surgical procedure were possible, couldn't we have two recollections, admittedly inconsistent, of the same party? Why couldn't we believe that we simultane-

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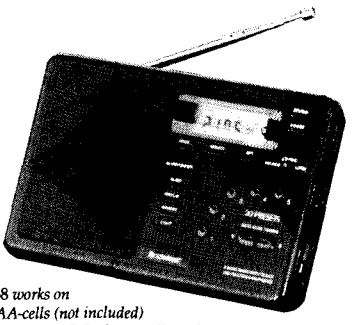

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ously attended two parties? This suggestion, of course, is absurd. But its absurdity is owed to the fact that consciousness normally creates coherent memories.

Normally, but not always: there are neurological disorders in which patients do accept as perfectly reasonable what we would consider incoherent or illogical. One such disorder, which is mentioned briefly by Dennett, is called hemineglect, though the name is a misnomer. Hemineglect patients tend to ignore the existence of their paralyzed left side. One patient, for example, when asked to raise her left arm either failed to respond or remained immobile and said, "There it is done." When the physician pointed to the patient's arm, she denied that it was hers and attributed it to the physician, who then said, "That would mean I have three arms." "I guess so," the patient answered. Shown her arm in a mirror she instantly recognized it as hers, though a moment later she again attributed her real arm to the physician.

What cases like this show is not "neglect," but a profound alteration in the awareness of self and others. The structure of the patient's consciousness, of her knowledge, has changed; and her sense of logic—indeed, the way she sees and understands the world—is therefore beyond our comprehension. Dennett, who seems to have been duped by the name of the syndrome, explains that hemineglect

> could be described as a loss of political clout by certain parties of demons in the brain, due, in many but not all cases, to the death or suppression of their Representative. These demons are still active, trying to do their various things and even succeeding on occasion, but they no longer can win out in certain competitions against better organized coalitions.

But surely a patient's nonchalantly attributing her arm to another, and yet recognizing the same arm in a mirror, cannot be described as "a loss of political clout." "Demons" and "Representatives" do not help us understand cases of hemineglect, nor do they give us any clues about the nature of consciousness. For consciousness is not the consequence of a competition among various stimuli or even ideas. It is, as we shall see, the relations among these stimuli.

Still, Dennett is not trying naively to relate conscious awareness of phenomena to their unconscious representations. He argues that there is a difference, but he doesn't seem to know why. Thus when he notes, for example, that our subjective idea of the timing of events is not determined by the real temporal order of the stimuli, he supports this correct claim with a description of a much-discussed experiment (known as the "phi experiment") in which two spots of light slightly separate in space, one green and one red, are flashed alternately. We do not see red and green spots being alternately lit, but a sequence of events that does not actually occur: we first see the green spot, then a *moving* image of the green spot *changing* to red, and then the red spot. Though we are aware of a single moving image that changes color, we are in fact looking at two differently colored stimuli that are alternately lit and that never move.

But why, if there is no "seeming to move" event, as Dennett puts it, and no "changing color" event in the brain, are we made aware of these non-events? The brain, Dennett tells us, "creates the content (the judgment) that there was intervening motion, and this content is then available to govern activity and leave its mark on memory." The brain, he continues, does not "fill in the blanks," creating an image of "seeming motion and change of color," but simply "judges" that this is what its responses to the stimuli mean. But then why does the brain make these particular "judgments"? Why motion, why change in the color of a single spot of light, when neither exist in the stimuli? Indeed, why does it sometimes make things up (telling us there is motion and change) and at other times reliably tell us what is going on (that we are after all looking at a spot over there that is red and a spot over here that is green)?

Dennett's claim that the brain "judges" its own activities is too vague, at best. If by judgment he means the workings of his "virtual machine," the combined effects of one's cultural inheritance, then certainly he is right. If that is the case, however, then how was this culture created in the first place, if not by the activity of conscious beings? It is culture because we are conscious; we first became aware of it because of consciousness; and our notions of it have changed over time. If our consciousness is affected by our past, it is because perception (or awareness) is a process that integrates past and present into something that is neither the one nor the other, but rather a constantly evolving relation between the two.

The problem in the phi experiment, I would argue, is the same problem that the brain confronts in observing any stationary object: How do we know that we are always observing the same object? How do we know that we are always observing the same light bulb? Or that the light bulb we have been watching for the past minute is the same bulb that has just been turned off? We know it is the same bulb because conscious awareness is based on the brain's establishing a *relation* between a set of stimuli at a given moment and those of the immediately preceding moment.

This is why there are no copies of our conscious images and thoughts in the brain. We see a green spot moving, and changing to red, because the brain relates the first arrival of red light to the immediately preceding stimuli, the slightly differently placed green spot, making us aware of the relation between the two sets of stimuli: a "moving green spot changing to red" is a relation, and this relation is consciousness. This is why motion pictures give us the illusion of moving images, when in fact we are watching a series of still photos. We are not aware of the individual photos, but of the relation of one photo to another; and this relation is manifested as a conscious moving image. The sense of motion can exist only in consciousness, not in any representation in the brain.

The stream of consciousness, then, is a flow of relations: the connections between moments, not the moments themselves. Conscious perception is temporal; continuity derives from the correspondences that the brain establishes from moment to moment. If it were otherwise, we would perceive a collection of unrelated and unrelatable moments, and therefore we would be unable to acquire knowledge and understanding of the world. That is why conscious knowledge is so different from the information that can be stored in machines such as computers—at least as they are presently conceived. The information that we can record in books, or in photographs, is like instant snapshots from this dynamic flow.

This, at least for me, is the significance of the phi experiment. But this is quite different from Dennett's view. For though Dennett wants to explain why there is no direct correspondence between the "objective ordering" of events in the brain and our awareness of them, he fails to recognize that conscious knowledge is dynamic. What is dynamic for Dennett, by contrast, is not consciousness, but the choices that the brain makes among many pieces of specific information created by stimuli. This he calls the Multiple Drafts model of the brain: there are many streams, or narratives, created by stimuli in the brain, like a series of simultaneous films made by

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different people. From these multiple drafts the brain "edits" what will eventually become conscious:

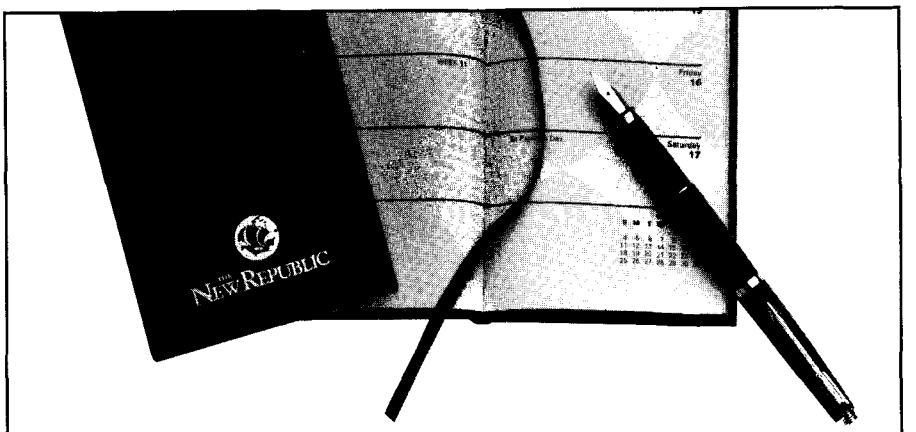
> This multitrack process occurs over hundreds of milliseconds, during which time various additions, incorporations, emendations, and overwritings of content can occur, in various orders. These yield, over the course of time, something *rather like* a narrative stream or sequence, which can be thought of as subject to continual editing by many processes distributed around the brain, and continuing indefinitely into the future. Contents arise, get revised, contribute to the interpretation of other contents or to the modulation of behavior and in the process leave their traces on memory.

But to talk of the brain's editing is again too vague; and to posit a "virtual machine," a cultural inheritance as the underpinning of this editing, is to suggest the obvious, namely, that culture affects the way we think and act. Consciousness remains unexplained.

One important aspect of the dynamics of consciousness is memory. We can only know our memories consciously; and if all conscious awareness is indeed relational, memories too must be relational: they are always subjective and hence always in relation to the self. My memories are mine, yours are yours. There is no way I can transfer my memories to you. The essence of memory is a relation to myself, to others, to events, and so on. And memories, like all such relations, can only exist in consciousness, not as stored images.

Perceptions, too, must exist in relation to the self and are dependent on memories—again, perception, memory, and consciousness are all part of the same process. Neurological evidence suggests, I believe, that the self emerges from the relation that the brain establishes between perceptions and its own internal creation of a "dynamic body image"; and memories emerge in relation to this self. William James, for example, describes a multiple personality in which one personality has a totally anesthetized body and sees grizzly bears as "black hogs" that are laughing when she beats them; in her other personality her body is extremely sensitive to pain, and she is fully aware that she is looking at growling grizzly bears. For Dennett, conscious recollections are simply unconscious stored information that has reached a new "threshold of activation."

It is Dennett's choice of metaphors—demons, representatives, multiple drafts, political clout, editing, judgments, and decisions—that reveals the weakness of his argument. Rather than solve the problem of consciousness, they them-



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selves refer to some sort of hidden consciousness, to a cultural inheritance ("memes") that organizes the many little "stupid" homunculi into a conscious being. Yes, consciousness is organized by our past experiences. But *why*? Because it derives from dynamic relations—more correctly, it is those relations—between sets of stimuli over time.

Dennett has failed, then, to grasp the ways in which conscious knowledge and perception are structurally different from any kind of mechanical reproduction of information in use today. His book seems more concerned with convincing us that computers, as they are now conceived, can become conscious than with telling us what consciousness is all about. I see no reason why a conscious computer might not one day be built. But before that can happen, we will have to understand what it is about consciousness and memory that is so different from anything we have been able to imitate in computers so far.

ISRAEL ROSENFIELD's new book, *The Strange, Familiar and Forgotten: An Anatomy of Consciousness*, will be published by Knopf in April.

Sex in the Head

BY VERLYN KLINKENBORG

Mating
by Norman Rush

(Knopf, 480 pp., $23)

The plot of Norman Rush's novel, his first, has the appealing simplicity of a fairy tale or a chivalric romance. A person of prepossessing strength and vigor and single-mindedness ventures alone into the desert and comes upon a forbidden, magical village. There that person courts and wins a mate of prepossessing purity. Usually the quester is male, his prize a female paragon. But in *Mating*, the quester is a woman, a lapsed doctoral candidate in nutritional anthropology, who goes unnamed throughout the novel. The desert is the Kalahari, in Botswana, and the magical village is Tsau, an experiment in matriarchal, self-sufficient, communal living created by the narrator's ideal mate, a man called Nelson Denoon. Denoon's purity is neither spiritual nor sexual (though he is celibate when the story begins). It is ideological, the only kind of purity that counts in black Africa, where every white face is the sign of a political theorem.

But *Mating* is not a fairy tale or a chivalric romance. It is an extremely sophisticated dramatic monologue, one of whose many theses is that only a woman has heart enough to search for heroic love. A man like Denoon practices instead the erotic force of withdrawal, which is his form of heroism. He retreats, he isolates himself, and his purity increases, though as a man his notion of love is completely non-abstract. "Love," says the remarkable narrator, "is strenuous. Pursuing someone is strenuous. What I say is if you find yourself condemned to wanting love, you have to play while you can play. Of course it would be so much easier to play from the male side. They never go after love qua love, ever. They go after women." There is no taking sides while reading *Mating*. You are not for the narrator and her obsessive quest for love, nor are you for Denoon: you are for the struggle between them, for the sexual game itself, so complex and artful and comic does it become.

The story begins "within the embassy penumbra" in Gabarone, Botswana, a world where the indifferent audience of black faces forces whites into postures even more ridiculous than the ones their bureaucratic or commercial affiliations force them into. (This was the setting for several of the stories in Rush's first book, *Whites*, including "Bruns," which was told in the voice of the same anthropologist who narrates *Mating*.) Out of the disappointments of African life, says the narrator, greed arises, and her greed is for intellectual love. Throughout *Mating*, the reader expects to come upon some kind of detailed flashback from the narrator's childhood. It never happens (a sign of Rush's alertness to his narrator's voice), but you learn enough to know that for the narrator intellectual love is both a way of reworking the inadequacies of the past and a way of doing her homework.

"I grew up clinging to the idea," she writes, "that either I was original in an unappreciated way or that I could be original—this later—by incessant striving and reading and taking simple precautions like never watching television again in my life." It is hard to miss the compensatory note in this: she is the daughter of a mother (her lone parent) whose physical debilities—the narrator calls her "the colossus of Duluth"—mirror her emotional debilities. The narrator's search for intellectual love is a search for some ideal, non-historical version of herself. And it is also, plainly, a means of compensating for the intellectual unease that a person with a lapsed dissertation, who happens to be striving for ideological purity, is likely to feel. "What beguiles you toward intellectual love," she says,

> is the feeling of observing a mental searchlight lazily turning here and there and lighting up certain parts of the landscape you thought might be dubious or fraudulent but lacked the time or energy to investigate or the inner authority to dismiss tout court.... You are barely able to take note of the earthshaking novelties people are producing before they are swathed in bibliographies to be gotten through.

The narrator works up to intellectual love in stages, through Giles, a British photographer, through Martin Wade, an ascetic South African exile, and through Z, a spy. With each of these men she conducts a kind of sexual barter, though, as she says, "I'm against what I did." The rate of exchange is clearest with Giles. In return for a rather languid sexual promise, Giles takes her to see "the world's greatest waterfall from the windows of an establishment amounting to a wet dream of doomed white settler amour propre." Wade, under constant South African surveillance, offers her the attractions of danger and a first stab at ideological purity. And Z? Z tells her where to find the elusive Denoon.

Denoon first surfaces at a USAID mission party in Gabarone. Beyond the rooms full of inconvenient food and "all the Brits with ludic names," beyond the maid "drizzling liquid incense onto light bulbs with an eyedropper," Denoon is holding an informal seminar in the guest house. The narrator is ushered into the roomful of men by Denoon's ex-wife Grace, who later presents the narrator to Denoon as something delectable, someone already sold on his stardom. And indeed his stardom is apparent. He holds the audience in his grasp. Against the narrator's internal commentary ("This man needed editing. I wanted to scream at him to give us the five sins of socialism or sit down"), Denoon unfolds his ideas on the nature of village development in Africa. He is neither daunted nor impressed by heresy or paradox. He

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indulges in what one of his listeners calls "suigenerism." He has a famous voice.

The effect of it all on the narrator is erotic. "Is it erotic or not," she asks, "to be in the ambience of someone who offhandedly confutes the two systems that are dividing the world, is fairly convincing about it, and has in reserve something entirely his own and superior? Is it erotic or not that he is even diffident about going into it?" This is gray-matter eroticism. It is not completely incorporeal, but it's close. The narrator's appraisal of Denoon's appearance, the substratum of most eroticism, has a rather chilling, cerebral quality about it: "His superficies were good. The whites of his eyes were models of whiteness ... and I could tell that his gingivae were as good as mine." Here is the narrator's idea of an erotic outburst: "He was so interdisciplinary! Economics, anthropology, economic anthropology, you name it in the policy sciences, not to mention development proper and being in actual charge of a sequence of famous rural development projects in Africa!" And yet it is real eroticism, the kind that plays on her nerve endings and makes her buzz. When Z first raises the possibility of finding Denoon, she says, "I was so labile it was ridiculous. It would be about as hard to read me as being in the kitchen and noticing when the compressor went on in the refrigerator."

Clearly *Mating* is no ordinary love story. It is serious romance refracted comically through the mind of a startlingly individual narrator, a narrator on a campaign of intellectual self-betterment and self-analysis that will not quit. Her faculties do not form a democracy; she subordinates imagination and emotion to her analytical passion. Her responses to the world ripple down from a lexical center somewhere deep inside her brain, a lexical center where a bomb of sorts seems to have gone off, spraying shards of academic speech into the everyday streets around it. In the disarray of her self and her intellect, the narrator has set aside any notion of linguistic decorum, of the pigeonholes that govern diction. Her language is razor-edged, rambling, loony. She is delightful to quote, especially when she is talking about herself: "I see myself as quite perfectible. It always surprised me how few pygmalious, polymathic men ever had been interested in sprucing me up, given that I'm so interested and available, and that, as everyone notices first about me, I remember everything." She somehow misses the fact that almost no one is polymathic enough to be pygmalious toward someone so bent on perfection.

She herself is pygmalious toward her men. In her character there is no room for lounging, even in the intervals of intellection. She remembers everything and she sees everything. She zooms in close, magnification set on high. She has thought everything onto the level of theory. When she and Denoon first embrace in Tsau ("the omphalos," she says, "of my idioverse"), she delays the clinch itself with a small dissertation on its ideal form: "The best standing-up embrace is like that one, slightly off center so that you have his leg and not his actual téméraire up against you, one hand on the base of your spine, and you are brought in against him but not mashingly. His cheek is at your ear but not occluding your actual ear canal." Her powers of observation, on the sexual level, have their politics, too. "Men," she says, "are like armored things, mountainous assemblages of armor and leather, masonry even, which you are told will self-dismantle if you touch the right spot, and out will flow passionate attention." She loathes "the plague of little moth kisses from men just planting their seniority on you."

Because of the range of the narrator's attentions, *Mating* manages to be many kinds of novel at once. Chiefly, it is a sexual comedy, of course, but it is also an academic satire, on the *Lucky Jim* level, despite the bush-bound status of the narrator. You cannot hear her say, "He had toothpicks with him and handed me some proleptically," without also hearing the patter of jargon that falls on the university these days. When she begins to fear, in Tsau, that she is losing Denoon's attention, she reacts instinctively, i.e., academically:

> I was going to lose Denoon because I wasn't acting intelligently.... And I was failing to understand [him] because the situation of trying to learn while I was in the act of living with him recapitulated my difficulties in absorbing material in lecture settings as opposed to absorbing material from a text, from something I could reread and underline.

By the time things have gone this far between them, she is so cathected, to use a word of her own, toward Denoon that she decides "to cull and put together under the right headings everything I had on Nelson so far," to turn him into a text, from which she quotes abundantly during the course of her story. "This," she adds, "did not seem bizarre to me in any way." Denoon's equally instinctive decision to absent himself for a time on the pretense of business is, under the circumstances, proleptic.

I have been praising the narrator of *Mating* as if she, rather than its author, were responsible for the book. But that is how reading the book feels: as if you were looking directly down the coal-chute of the narrator's mind, where everything is mediated so thoroughly by her training that, in true academic fashion, it feels third-hand, though it is no less comic for being so. Immediacy, for her, is a dirty word. When emotional self-knowledge fails her, she blames it on the shortcomings of her discipline. "Basically the reason I don't know why I felt the way I did," she explains,

> is because unfortunately we don't know what we are, anthropology notwithstand-

Buddy Check

Reflected clouds which skim along the lake
Dissolve in all the pandemonium—
They break down to patchy bits of silver
As campers pierce the water's glassy membrane.
Around the docks these boys don't have much sense;
They punch and shove and force each other under.
The lifeguard calls them out when things have gone
Too far. They swish up from the icy water
And count off heads in pairs of glazed and pebbled
Bodies. He wants the numbers synchronized
And loud, and when they botch it, he fills them in
On how long he'll wait for their precision—
Forever, of course, if it takes till then.
Behind mirrored glasses, from his perch,
He's obsessed with making them get it right
The way my mother insists that I get right
The names of those she's lost in the past.
Carlota. Dorothy. Jane. Claude. And others.
She recites the names as if they could trigger
An instant sorrow in me; but they don't.
Most I've forgotten, some I've never met.
She wants me to feel her grief and I should,
But she fears that I'll slip from her too
And won't let me forget that those ghosts
Are her life—it's morbid, and like a child
I refuse to get it right. In all the times
I've listened to her keep those people close
And given only deadly silence back,
I wish I could just once *between us* find
A soul to praise, or one to be forgiven.

DANIEL ANDERSON

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ing, even though the reason I clutched anthropology to my bosom was because I believed that academic disciplines did what they said they were doing rather than being hotbeds of dominance behavior where disagreeing on the simplest point gets you into a Götterdämmerung with somebody or his disciples.

By novel's end, as she tries to decide how to read an ambiguous phone message from Africa, possibly from Denoon, the narrator has taken herself firmly in hand. "I've done what I do best," she says, "made an academic study of myself centering on the last two years, made myself a field of academic study with only one specialist in it."

The only mistake on the author's part is Tsau, the magical, matriarchal village in the Kalahari. It is not quite utopia, but it takes almost as much explaining as utopias usually do. Every structure in the village—social, architectural, financial, mechanical—needs describing, and it falls, of course, to the narrator to do it. This squanders her abilities. She is fascinated by Tsau, and yet to her (a woman with no reason to love the mater in matriarchy) its ideological attractions are faint compared with those of Denoon. You pause often to admire the ingenuity that has gone into inventing Tsau, but it is the author's ingenuity showing through at last, as something completely distinct—manifestly clever—from the brilliantly self-defining idiom of the narrator's voice.

And it is in the sections of the novel set in Tsau that it occurs to you to wonder whether Norman Rush, who has ingenuity to burn, has not in some way taken sides himself, whether this woman's attentions do not, somehow, start to feel like an onslaught. In Tsau's world of non-aggressive, rather distant women, portrayed by the imposing woman who says to Denoon, "I revere the level of argument you impose on others," there is only one significant male. As Denoon withdraws himself from Tsau and from the ever-widening inquiries of the ever-probing narrator, you wonder whether he is not exchanging winks with the novel's only other significant male, its author.

In the end Denoon withdraws more completely than he means to. On his way to Tikwe, to start a sister village to Tsau, he suffers an accident, alone, in the Kalahari, and experiences a vision that leaves him nearly mute, caught up in the kind of transcendental raptness that gives the narrator gas. It had been an axiom of their relationship that "intellectual love is for the secular mind, because if you discover that someone, however smart, is—he has neglected to mention—a Thomist or in Baha'i, you think of him as a slave to something uninteresting." Suddenly Denoon is that someone. He retreats into a silence toward which, the narrator is well aware, she had been driving him with her "too concentrated and cathected soundings re the books in his life," but to which he is also assisted by eleven days alone in the Kalahari with broken limbs, watching death come nearer and nearer. To the narrator, Denoon's new sense of spiritual communion with the universe ("Consciousness is bliss," he says) is nearly unforgivable. Back in Gabarone, she unloads him on a beautiful young woman named Bronwen ("People were arranging what they had to do so they could rest their eyes on her ... I was nothing despite my superior bosom") and returns to the United States, where life is "like being stabbed to death with a butter knife by a weakling."

During her last days in Tsau, while she is pondering whether to go off into the Kalahari in search of Denoon, the narrator suffers what she would call a regression re anthropology. It dawns on her that throughout Africa the watchers are really the watched. "I am mentally asking you not to surveil me," she imagines saying to the residents of Tsau in her distress, "which is the most boring thing you can either do or be subject to. All over the world in the privacy of their huts anthropologists are turning up their hands and saying this is boring." After she had found Denoon, when he is being his most cryptic, she quotes Denoon to himself: "Thought looks into the face of hell and is not afraid. That was you, wasn't it, from Bertrand Russell?" But her point is that thought looks into the face of hell and is not bored.

The heroism of her search for love was premised upon the gigantic contours of Denoon as he was, before he fell into the banality of bliss. She scaled Denoon like an Alp and was enlarged in so doing, until she, not he, was the hero. The note of lamentation in the narrator's voice at the end of the novel does not resolve itself; it is scarcely lamentation at all. ("I can get sex. My celibacy is known and is highly exciting to certain oaves on my periphery.") The note of lamentation remains suspended, ironic, in hope perhaps that Denoon's desert epiphany is but one more tactic on his part, one more way of being "so famously sardonic! So heretical!" It remains suspended because *Mating* is a modern comedy, which ends not in marriage, the solid reckoning of love, but in the merest possibility of love's continuance.

VERLYN KLINKENBORG's most recent book is *The Last Fine Time* (Knopf).

After the Revolution

BY TAMAR JACOBY

Reflections of an Affirmative Action Baby by Stephen C. Carter

(Basic Books, 286 pp., $23)

Whatever else the Thomas hearings accomplished, Clarence Thomas, Anita Hill, and the large cast of supporting witnesses introduced TV audiences to a side of America that few knew about: the largely new world of middle-class black life. Ivy League law schools, fast-track Washington careers, corporate management, and law professorships: the glittering résumés shattered stereotypes. So did the aplomb of the young professionals, people who seemed quite rightly to take for granted that they should play a shaping part in American life.

These were not "black firsts" or lonely racial pioneers. Though some had worked their way up a steep ladder, they seemed to have spent wonderfully little time worrying that they would always be outsiders. At Yale, Hill and Thomas had joined a welcoming black community; there and in Washington they had found a full world of "mentors," "role models," and opportunities to "network," a world not terribly different from the connections that await aspiring white preppies. The black middle class has tripled in thirty years, and it now accounts for some one-third of all blacks. These young lawyers, all part of that burgeoning class, testified more than anything to the success of the civil rights revolution.

That many of them should now be doubting the tactics of that revolution may seem ironic, but it hardly disquali-

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fies their arguments. People like Hill and Thomas have as much right as anyone to question affirmative action; if anything, they have more authority than most. The problem with Thomas's stance on racial preferences—much like the problem with his more personal testimony—is not so much that he holds such views, but that he has been so ineffective in arguing them, preferring to posture and stonewall rather than explain. Thomas and his patrons missed a rare chance at the hearings to make a conservative black case on racial policy. What exactly in Thomas's experience of affirmative action so outweighed the benefits it obviously had for him? What worked for him and what did not? Can the successes and the failures be separated, with a view to redesigning the programs?

Thomas and Company should have been a mine of racial advice. Surely they know and care more than almost anyone about how we might achieve the goals of affirmative action—how, that is, we might eliminate the problems without giving up on lifting blacks into the mainstream. Thomas himself isn't talking. But some of his professional cohort, among them Stephen C. Carter, are beginning to talk. Middle-class Ivy League graduate, Supreme Court law clerk, and one of the youngest professors to receive tenure at Yale Law School, Carter too is a happy example of how "the system" can now work for able blacks. Like Thomas, he is deeply ambivalent about the assumptions of the revolution that has carried him to the top of his profession. Unlike Thomas, Carter makes an earnest effort to explain those doubts and to draw some useful lessons from them.

Carter likes to see himself as part of a tradition, a line of what he calls "dissenting black intellectuals" such as Thomas Sowell and Glenn Loury who dared years ago to question affirmative action and the orthodoxies of the civil rights movement. Two or three or five years ago, Carter's book would have been seen as an act of shocking defiance. Like other black dissenters writing then, he would have been all but banned from his own community, shunned as a traitorous conservative and self-hating Uncle Tom. Carter is no less brave than those earlier writers, his book no less challenging or thought-provoking; but his work belongs in a markedly different category, precisely because he experienced the policies he questions. This makes his criticism at once softer and subtler, but also—if you buy it—all the more telling.

Carter's book is important as evidence that the climate is ready for a new kind of dissenter. Looking back over a decade, he provides a painful chronicle of just how viciously the first wave of so-called black conservatives was ostracized: attacked ad hominem, disinvited to meetings, thrown out of AfroAm departments, and generally "purged" from the black community. "Sowell is giving aid and comfort to America's racists," columnist Carl Rowan wrote some years ago, and other polemicists tried to discredit Shelby Steele by whispering that his wife was white. Carter himself experienced a little of this fury when he first aired his doubts about affirmative action in 1989; letters called him self-abasing and concluded, "Shame on you." Carter expects more of the same in reaction to this book, but he is convinced that the mood in the black community is slowly shifting away from the old ideologues.

The change is too recent for Carter to document in the kind of detail one would like. As Thomas himself showed, rallying support with his histrionic "high-tech lynching" speech, solidarity is still a paramount value in the black community. Still, Carter is persuaded that many blacks are tiring of the party line—questioning racial preference, doubting how much the government can do in the ghetto, wondering if there is indeed such a thing as a "black view" of the world. So far, Carter says, these are still mostly unspoken questions, but he believes that airing them can help bring them to the fore. The Thomas hearings could not have been better timed to prove Carter's point. Just as Steele and Loury prepared the ground for Carter, so Thomas opened up the field for others—not necessarily to side with him, but to stand somewhere in the middle of the spectrum that he all but created by opposing the black orthodoxy. The black community has far from given up on affirmative action, but even as the hearings unfolded, black opinion writers (William Raspberry, Juan Williams, Brent Staples) began looking at the issue with a new openness of mind. The taboo has been broken: what was once beyond discussion is suddenly a subject of debate.

As a second-generation dissenter, Carter enjoys a certain leeway that most of his black predecessors did not have. The pioneer iconoclasts like Sowell and Loury had to define themselves by tacking sharply to the right. Though full of sympathy for their brave crusade, Carter is far less severe and less single-minded, less assertive in his views. He can afford to be a little playful, to lean occasionally toward the arguments he is debunking, to give the black establishment its occasional due. The very title of his book is a mark of irreverence: not only does he question racial preferences, he can even poke a little fun at them. He can also wander around comfortably in the middle of the political spectrum, truly unclassifiable as liberal or conservative.

Perhaps most important, as a second-wave dissenter, Carter feels free to write more openly as a black man. He can look squarely at his own racial feelings, and at the insecurities that give rise to orthodox black views. He knows and admits the common black fear that white stereotypes might be accurate. He sympathizes with black paranoia about the white world. He, too, feels a need for a race-based group identity, and he acknowledges the fear of competing with white people. All of this makes Carter better at explaining blacks to whites. More significant still, his even-handed empathy should make him more persuasive in the black community.

Of course, on affirmative action Carter is still open to criticism from both whites and blacks who see him as a hypocrite, attacking the very programs that got him where he is today. Carter has, by his own account, lived his "entire adult life in a world defined ... by racial preferences." His college scholarship was earmarked for blacks; his professors all regarded him differently; he would not, he knows for a fact, have gotten into law school if he had not been black. A painstakingly honest and introspective writer, he does not regret the leg up. Still, today as he looks over his life, he isn't sure the help was worth the price he had to pay for it. "We [blacks]," he writes, "bristle [at] the qualification question—'Did you get into school or get hired because of a special program?'—and that prickly sensitivity is the best evidence ... of the principal costs of racial preferences." A superachiever with a dazzling record, Carter is convinced he could have made it on his own. More than anything, he resents affirmative action for denying him the chance to demonstrate that. "We are not," he writes, "the beneficiaries of affirmative action: we are the victims."

Unlike the first wave of black dissenters, Carter has little interest in what might be called the political or objective case against racial preferences. He pooh-

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poohs white gripes and shrugs at backlash. He is not, he tells us, troubled by "the fairness argument": he doesn't think that very many qualified whites suffer—or suffer too unjustly—as a result of race-based admissions. He could care less about economic efficiency. What interests him, almost exclusively, is the psychological case against affirmative action. In effect, he says, affirmative action masks and promotes racial stereotyping. "Supporters of preferences cite a whole catalog of explanations for the inability of people of color to get along without them," Carter writes. "All entail the assumption that [blacks] cannot at present compete on the same playing field with people who are white." Once again, as in the past, blacks have internalized white stereotypes—and instead of being empowered, they are only further demoralized. Carter dislikes quotas because of the inner damage they do to black people—blacks like himself who are confident and skillful, but also, even more disastrously, people who are not.

This heavily psychological focus is at once the strength and the weakness of Carter's book. As critics will argue, only a man who thinks that feelings matter more than anything could believe that the humiliation of affirmative action is too high a price to pay even for real career advancement; and Carter cannot answer these skeptics. He cannot prove that he would have made it on his own. He cannot guarantee how many other blacks could in fact compete successfully without help. Nor can he demonstrate, as he believes, that the long-term costs of black self-doubt—doubt perpetuated by affirmative action—may hold blacks back more than today's promotions help them. Carter's arguments rest solely on his experience and conviction.

He recognizes the limits of this personal perspective and wisely avoids the categorical. He does not rule out all affirmative action, and in fact, promoting his book on TV, he has sounded even more equivocal than in print. Nor does he try to speak on behalf of all blacks. Do uneducated hard hats hired under a quota suffer the same doubts that a law professor does? Carter does not address the issue, though he clearly believes that the perpetuation of racial stereotyping is too high a price for any of us, black or white, to continue paying for preferences. (Like many people, he doubts that affirmative action does much for the poorest blacks, and he advocates expanded social programs to help them.) Whatever good affirmative action once did, Carter is convinced that it has outlived its usefulness, and at the end of this passionate and lucid book, it is hard to argue with his personal testimony. If he is convinced his children should compete unaided, it is hard to see how anyone else can insist that they be helped.

In fact, Carter's solution is a compromise proposal. Like many would-be reformers of affirmative action, he would like to have the cake without the calories. Colleges and professional schools should make an effort to recruit blacks. They should "take risks" on "highly motivated students—some of them people of color, some of them not—who might not be 'sure things' but who show good evidence of being positioned to take advantage of what the school can offer." Still, he insists, no school should bend its standards in the process. Real black pride, he says, demands nothing less. Personal excellence, standards, responsibility: though he dislikes the label "conservative," Carter's credo is an old-fashioned one. He fantasizes playfully about the day when the stereotypers will say, "Oh, you know those black people, they always work twice as hard as everybody else."

It would be tempting to call his proposal unrealistic—if he were not so candid and smart about the things that hold blacks back, particularly the assumptions of inferiority. Carter does not deny those psychic hurdles—far from it; but he sees no value in simply giving in to them, as he believes affirmative action does. Whether or not his proposal would help overcome those hurdles—and I'm not sure it would—Carter's book is a timely call to think again about what we hope to achieve with racial preferences. As Martin Luther King warned in the early 1960s, it's easy to mistake desegregation for something it is not, to settle for a society "where elbows are together and hearts are apart." Thirty years of affirmative action have promoted many people, but they have done sadly little to convince blacks or whites that the two races are in fact equal.

The second half of Carter's book, even more compelling than the first part, moves beyond traditional affirmative action to the issue of black identity. These later chapters are attracting less attention, no doubt because on affirmative action Carter seems so reassuring to white readers: a black man announcing that preferences have run their course. The question of racial identity—how important it is, how healthy or self-limiting it is—is newer, more treacherous territory, and Carter's views are far less comfortable for whites.

In this realm, too, Carter argues a middle position, questioning the extreme Afrocentrism that is sweeping the black community. He does not agree with people like Spike Lee, who says that no white could make a movie about Malcolm X—that whites, in effect, cannot understand black experience. Nor does Carter have much sympathy for applicants who demand affirmative action on the ground that it will open the establishment to a "diversity of viewpoints." There is, he insists, no "black way to be." "Race is not the same as culture"; it is not a "proxy for views." There is no single, uniform black stance on civil rights policy, or on anything else. To assume that there could be such a stance is just another form of stereotyping—and another way of silencing constructive debate in the black community.

Still, clear as he is on the dangers of excessive tribalism, Carter maintains that there is a "chasm" between black experience and white experience. He understands and empathizes with inner-city slum-dwellers who believe that no white man can ever be trusted. "When one looks at the world through [their] eyes," Carter writes, "it hardly takes a vivid imagination to suppose that things have worked out badly for black Americans because that is the way somebody planned it." Nor is this fault line simply a matter of class, a schism that disappears as one climbs the social ladder. Integrated as Carter is and successful in the mainstream, his loves and loyalties are entirely with his people. He defines his racial identity rather vaguely as "a commonality, something shared. Call it experience. Or history . . . a shred of recognition, of familiarity; a common knowledge, a common history of woeful oppression and glorious triumph." He wants to live among black neighbors; he wants his kids to play with other blacks. He is, as he says, always "rooting for us." Much as he abhors bending standards along racial lines, in other realms he embraces racial thinking. The last thing in the world he wants is to lose his "difference" in a colorblind society.

Here again, as in the first part of the book, Carter's psychological thinking sometimes lets him off the hook a little too easily. He makes a convincing case that it feels different to be black. But what exactly is the content of that difference? Is it something positive, a full-blown and sustaining cultural identity? Or is it just another way of talking about alienation—alienation that holds blacks back and that would better wither away as more and more blacks succeed in a mixed society? Carter's account of ghetto paranoia suggests that alienation plays a big part, though he is too taken with black difference to come to that conclusion. Group identity, in his view, is an essential mooring, and he craves

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black solidarity with an intensity that is hard to argue with. His love for his own people is affecting, and apparently it is sustaining for him. But it's not clear, even from what he says about other blacks' views, that all Afrocentrism is made of the same stuff.

On this issue, as on others, Carter sometimes seems unduly hopeful, convinced that Americans can have their differences and bridge the racial chasm, too. He sees clearly enough how solidarity can turn into ugly chauvinism, yet he assumes somehow that we can all learn to draw a nice bright line between them. Carter strives for an exquisite balance. Blacks can, he says, maintain both group identity and individual standards; they can define themselves racially and still take full part in the mainstream. Reasonable and admirable as this sounds, at times one can't help feeling that Carter's hopes have gotten the better of his realism. Still, Americans who are rethinking their ideas about pluribus and unum ought to look carefully at the balance that he has struck, exhorting blacks to make their way into the mainstream even as he reminds whites how different most blacks feel.

TAMAR JACOBY is writing a book on the recent history of race relations.

CORRESPONDENCE *continued from page 7*

records "do not specify with whom the candidate met, nor do they supply any other details as to who was actually in the party." In fact, Secret Service records from the period in question never supplied that information. (By describing the records as "heavily censored," Parry raised further suspicions about their authenticity; yet we obtained a perfectly clean set of records under FOIA. Nothing was hidden.) Emerson's notes of his interview with Parry show he specifically characterized Hashemi's death as "suspicious," "mysterious," and "something that should be investigated."

We are amazed that Parry still clings to Ben-Menashe's wild claims that he was an Israeli intelligence agent. A man who was denied a special security clearance because he was deemed "delusional," a man whose ex-wife contends he is "crazy and a liar," who was indicted for arms dealing, Ben-Menashe has now been found to be a pathological liar by *Newsweek*, ABC *News*, and the *London Sunday Times*. The only "evidence" Parry can cite as authenticating Ben-Menashe's claims is his private trips abroad, in which case Parry should begin interviewing every one of the more than 10 million Americans who travel abroad at least six times a year.

Parry insists he "had no choice when our program aired last April but to recount the trial" of Richard Brenneke. No choice? This is the first time we've ever heard the case for compulsory reporting of a known fabricator, as concluded by a Democratic investigative congressional report in 1988—more than six months before Brenneke's trial.

In raising questions about Chadwick's record, Unger attributes quotes to Chadwick that Chadwick says were "twisted out of context and which falsely portray me as raising a doubt about Casey's attendance." Before the start of the conference, Chadwick made marks on his list in pencil based on when he expected guests to show up. Heavy marks in pen were then made by Chadwick only when a guest's attendance differed from what had been expected. Casey was originally expected to arrive on July 29, but as the pen marks (or, in the case of July 29, lack of pen mark) indicate and as Chadwick recalls, Casey arrived on the evening of July 27 and stayed through July 29, attending all of the intervening sessions of the conference. Hashemi's allegation of consecutive meetings in Madrid is thus physically impossible. As far as Unger's five secondary sources are concerned, which are mentioned in Sick's book, all are confirmed prevaricators, including the ubiquitous Ari Ben-Menashe.

The only legitimate question that has been raised thus far about our article came from ABC News, which pointed out that we say Brenneke was the "only named source" for an ABC report in 1988 that described a covert contra supply operation, run by Donald Gregg, Vice President Bush's national security adviser. In fact, ABC News produced Jose Blandon, a former aide to General Noriega and currently a federal witness in the government's case against Noriega, on camera, to confirm the alleged existence of the contra operation. What we should have made clear was that Brenneke was the only person who said on camera that Gregg was also involved in running illegal drugs into the U.S. •

TRB *continued from page 4*

government may be stuck with if things don't improve. But any increase in real estate prices as a result of a capital gains break would simply reflect the future tax savings (the technical term is "capitalized present value"). In other words, the value of the break to any given property would exactly equal the cost of the break to the government. The government cannot possibly come out ahead by giving such a break to all real estate because it happens to own some real estate itself.

A big part of the real estate industry's problem today is the huge overbuilding that took place during the 1980s. And a big reason for that was artificial incentives for development enacted in 1978 and 1981, including an enlarged capital gains break. The 1986 tax reform closed most of these loopholes. Now the Bush-endorsed House Republican tax plan proposes to reopen some of the most egregious of them.

An interesting exchange of letters recently fell into my hands. A New England developer wrote to President Bush complaining about the recession and urging new tax breaks for real estate. His letter was forwarded to the Treasury Department and answered by an official whom I'd better not name. The Treasury official wrote: "Neutral taxation promotes the efficient allocation of investment resources, while the ability to use numerous tax incentives available for real estate prior to the 1986 Act had the opposite effect, the result of which was substantial overbuilding, one of the primary causes of the savings and loan crisis."

Exactly. A clearer case against Bush's own capital gains break, and the other gimmicks being urged in Congress, would be hard to compose.

All government subsidies to this and that form of economic activity are inherently suspect, but real estate subsidies are especially so. As my favorite economist, the nineteenth-century American autodidact Henry George, never tired of pointing out, land is a dead asset. A government subsidy to, say, computer chips will at least predictably produce more computer chips. A subsidy to land will not produce more land; it will just produce higher prices. Subsidies to houses and other buildings may produce a few more buildings. But at any given time, practically the entire real estate market (unlike the market for other products) consists of pre-existing stock. Most of any subsidy simply raises the price of this stock.

Real estate interests are politically powerful in both parties. (Along with Hollywood, they're about the only class of rich people the Democrats have got.) These folks got rich off the escalating prices of the 1980s and seem to feel that the government should guarantee that they not get poor again. Add to this the nervousness of homeowners and you've got an intoxicating political brew. But if the politicians succumb, the real economy will suffer.

MICHAEL KINSLEY

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WASHINGTON DIARIST

Goaltalk

I HAVE BECOME AN AFICIONADO of women's soccer. Wait! I know this sounds like something you don't care to hear about. But there's a sociopolitical angle that I'll get to shortly. Trust me. Women's soccer is a breakthrough sport. Not only do women—mostly they're girls—take to soccer at an early age, they soon play the game with more daring, more panache, even more athleticism than men, or boys. They're more exciting to watch. Anyone who saw the breathtakingly boring World Cup championship in 1990 between Germany and Argentina knows what's happened to men's soccer. It's become mechanical, plodding, largely defense-oriented. Women play wild offense, emphasizing speed, boldness, and slashing attacks. OK, I'm generalizing. But if you'd watched, say, the NCAA champion women's team at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill you'd know the point is valid. So how did women get so good at soccer? Simple. They got an opportunity to play and they rose to the occasion. I don't know who deserves the credit for creating that opportunity, but it certainly wasn't the male sports establishment. It opposed Title IX, which forced schools and colleges over the past two decades to inaugurate or expand sports programs for women. Title IX reflected society's changed attitude about women and sports (from discouraging to encouraging). Maybe feminists had something to do with that.

I CONFESS I HAVE A VESTED INTEREST here: two daughters who are serious players. Sports honchos still haven't caught on to the interest in women's soccer. We've got twenty-four-hour-a-day sports TV networks in this country, yet no one broadcast the women's World Cup championship in November. The games were shown live in some countries, by tape delay in others. This was the first world championship for women's soccer, and the United States won. The high-scoring American team, judging from skimpy print reports, was flashy and aggressive. It was the product of all the nurturing of women's soccer in the 1970s and 1980s. But ESPN blacked out the women's final, airing molasses-paced hunting and fishing shows instead. If that makes you mad, there's worse. The 1992 Olympics don't consider women's soccer a viable sport. It's not included as an event. Men's soccer is.

I'VE ALREADY INDULGED IN ONE OF the two great temptations of modern journalism, by mentioning myself and my family. Journalists tend to think of their lives as so richly meaningful, their fleeting thoughts so profound, that the world must be told all. Yes, I could have gone on and on about the melodrama and angst of soccer games my daughters have played in. But I restrained myself. The other temptation is harder to resist. That's the tendency to turn every idle conversation, every encounter, every power lunch, embassy reception, or dinner party, indeed every friendship, into a dragnet for information. For most Washington reporters there are no moments when the information detector is turned off. I've tried. Then someone will mention a tidbit of information, and I'll lurch, suddenly and uncontrollably, into the reporting mode. At that point the trick is to pretend that you're merely chatting when in fact you're reporting. That's not easy, especially since you can't take notes for fear the source will freeze up. After a few minutes, you excuse yourself, rush to the rest room, and jot down what you've learned on the back of a bank deposit slip. There's a rub, though. My experience is that the unwitting source has the last laugh. Whatever I've learned at social gatherings has invariably turned out to be old hat, something that everyone but me knew about. At a book party I once learned of a string of surprising sub-Cabinet appointments. I was excited—until I learned that *The Washington Post* had already reported them. James Reston of *The New York Times*, the best Washington reporter of the postwar generation, rightly noted in his memoir *Deadline* that reporters who hit the social circuit add "more to their weight than to their knowledge."

DAVID DUKE, THE LOUISIANA racist, has attained a special status with the media. Win or lose, his full-blown media attention continues. Jesse Jackson is the only other politician who's achieved this. The press treated Jackson as a serious contender for the 1988 Democratic presidential nomination all the way to the convention, even though he had no chance to win the nomination. Other primary losers were written off, but Jackson continued to draw serious, lavish coverage. Duke lost a Senate race in 1990 and a governor's race in 1991, yet the media stay glued to him. When an aide leaked that Duke would run against President Bush in a few Republican primaries in the South, CNN acted as if Desert Storm had begun again. It announced repeatedly it would cover live Duke's formal declaration of presidential plans. It's time for this to stop. Duke is largely a media creation in the first place and now he's being perpetuated by the press. In reality he is a rapidly declining political resource. His statewide vote in Louisiana fell from 44 percent in 1990 to 39 percent in 1991. His support among white voters dropped. And his backing among Republican voters nationwide is practically nil (2 percent in the latest *Los Angeles Times* poll). Nor is Duke "charismatic," as CNN and others have insisted. He drew large crowds in his governor's race, then bored them. The analogy with George Wallace doesn't fit. Wallace was clever, witty, sarcastic, a fascinating speaker with real demagogic skill. Wallace thrilled blue-collar crowds with his populist pitch. Duke is merely slick. Wallace won his governor's races and a lot of presidential primaries. Duke once won a state legislative seat. He deserves all the press coverage to which that triumph entitles him—and no more.

THE NATIONAL PRESS WAS TOO obsessed with Duke to notice the single most surprising result in last November's election. A referendum putting a woman's right to choose an abortion in the state constitution of Washington passed, but only by a few thousand votes, and only after absentee ballots were counted. In other words, it was practically a dead heat. This was surprising because Washington is one of the most socially liberal states in the country, and the referendum had been expected to win by something like 65 percent to 35 percent. I think this further contradicts the myth that the issue is a poison pill for political parties or politicians who oppose abortion. Pro-life governors won in Michigan, Iowa, Ohio, and Pennsylvania in 1990, and in Mississippi in 1991. Opposing abortion may not have helped them win, but it didn't hurt either.

FRED BARNES

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How to Spend the Peace Dividend

By Albert Shanker
President of the American Federation of Teachers

While people in Washington, D.C., are talking about improving the education system and meeting national goals by the year 2000, people in many of our local schools are wondering how they'll make it through the year.

Teachers in these schools are wondering whether they'll come in tomorrow and find that they have 45 kids in a class instead of the 40 they had today. Their salaries are already frozen, but will they hear that they're going to be furloughed or laid off? Or that their program will be the next one to get the ax? And in the midst of all this, they're worrying about the escalating needs of their students and how to meet them.

States and school districts across the country have their horror stories, but here are a few typical examples:

■ In Dade County, Florida, veteran teachers were encouraged to retire early to cut costs. No new teachers have been hired. But new students continue to enroll, and class sizes are huge. Many of these kids speak little if any English. What's going to happen to Dade's school restructuring effort? No one knows.

■ In New York City, where 1,000 teachers retire annually, over 4,000 teachers were enticed to accept early retirement. These teachers haven't been replaced. One out of 4 principals has also retired. Programs and services are being slashed. Some cynics might say, "Oh well, they weren't doing so well anyway." But academic achievement and school attendance had been going up and dropout rates down. The reforms responsible for this progress are stalled now.

■ In Los Angeles, like Dade and New York City, there are lots of retirees, no new hires and exploding class sizes. There have also been layoffs—among them a couple of teachers who had just been notified that their plans for restructuring schools had won a national grant competition. And few people hold out any hope that California's demanding new curriculum will be implemented.

■ In Cincinnati, teachers are spending their own money to supplement dwindling supplies, just like they are everywhere else. The average out-of-pocket expense: $200.

■ In Duval County, Florida, counselors who helped abused children, children from chaotic families and pregnant teenagers have been eliminated. The kids' problems continue, though.

■ In Baltimore City, the schools heard that their kids were below par on 12 out of 13 state standards the same week they heard that the schools would have to close down for a week in February. The reason? To save money, of course. (Incidentally, in Baltimore County, which outspends Baltimore City by about 50 percent, the kids are doing all right on the standards *and* the schools will be able to remain open.)

Using it to rescue our schools and children would be a better proposal than any we've heard so far.

What makes these cuts and cutbacks all the worse are the terrible and increasing problems of kids. And I'm not just talking about poor kids. As counselors get cut, teachers, who are already having to cope with bigger classes, try to take over. How can they possibly manage? And how can their communities simply expect them to take up the slack?

No one is more critical of the schools than I am or stronger in urging teachers to do more, do it differently and do it better. But the situation too many of our schools face is intolerable. And in case this sounds like special pleading, consider the experience of James Renier, the chief operating officer of Honeywell.

Renier, who has a special interest in education, recently accepted a challenge to be the acting principal at a junior high school in Robbinsdale, Minn. He was shocked by the number and extent of problems kids brought to school with them—and by the amount of time the school had to spend overcoming these problems to get kids ready to learn. And Renier's school was in an average *suburban* neighborhood. "All across the country," Renier concluded, "schools have accepted this responsibility—largely without recognition and without support. They have acted in default of families and community agencies—and the schools aren't equipped for the extra load." What should schools do? They "should be shouting through all the media available that unless the rest of the community acts responsibly, education is doomed, and with it our hopes for the blessings that education brings."

We want a great deal from our schools. We want them to educate our children to a world standard; we also want them to offer help to kids who need it—and that is an increasing number. But we can't expect this if we continue to slash school budgets and make teachers cope with all of society's problems.

James Renier talked about his school experiences at the National Education Goals Forum in Des Moines, Iowa. President Bush was scheduled to be there but couldn't make it. Maybe if he had heard Renier's speech, he'd be thinking about how to use the peace dividend to rescue America's devastated schools and children. That would be a better proposal for the peace dividend than any we've heard from Washington so far.

MR. SHANKER'S COMMENTS APPEAR IN THIS AD UNDER THE AUSPICES OF THE AMERICAN FEDERATION OF TEACHERS. READER CORRESPONDENCE IS INVITED. ADDRESS YOUR LETTERS TO MR. SHANKER AT THE AFT, 555 NEW JERSEY AVE., N.W., WASHINGTON, DC 20001. ©1991 BY ALBERT SHANKER.

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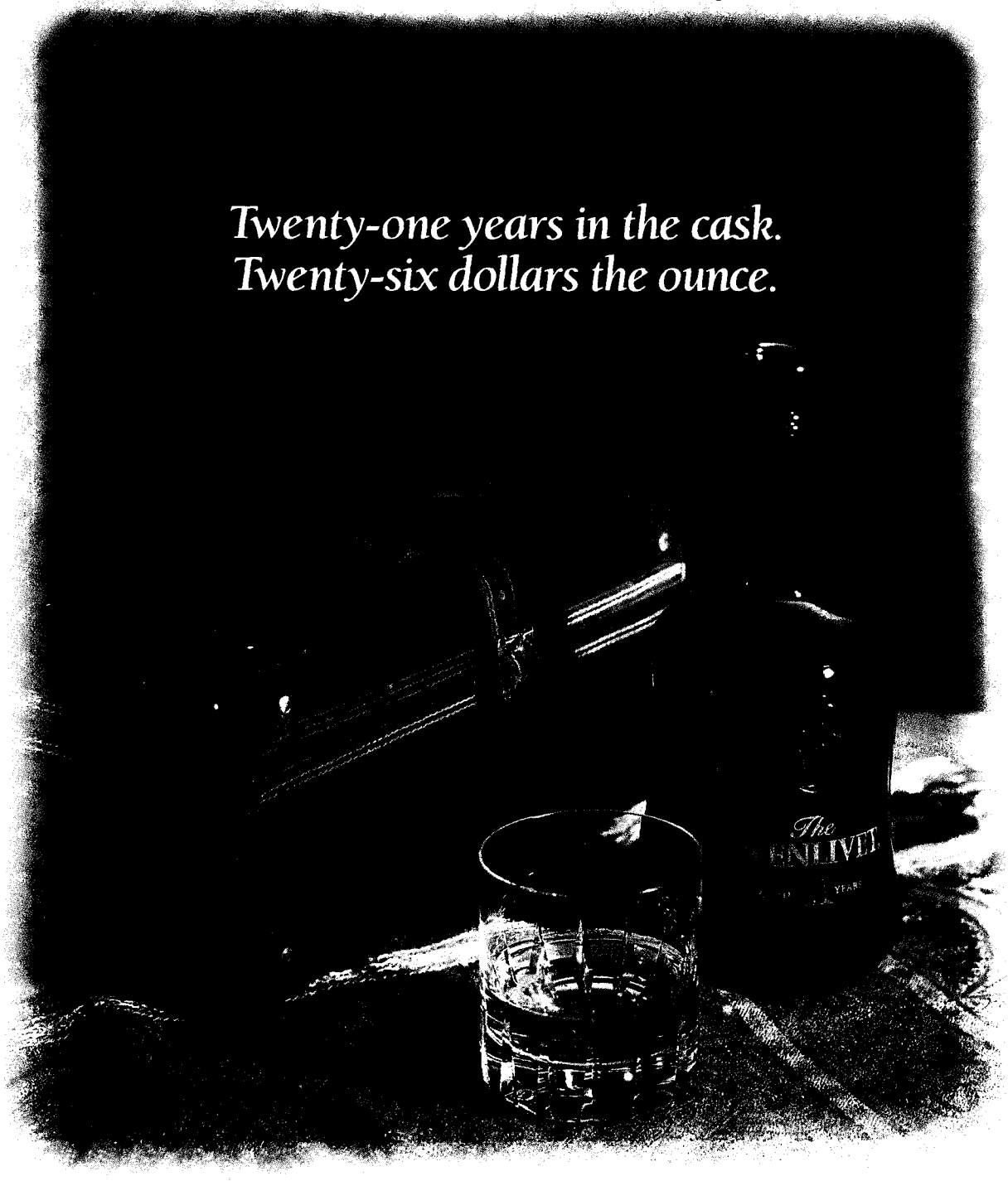

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